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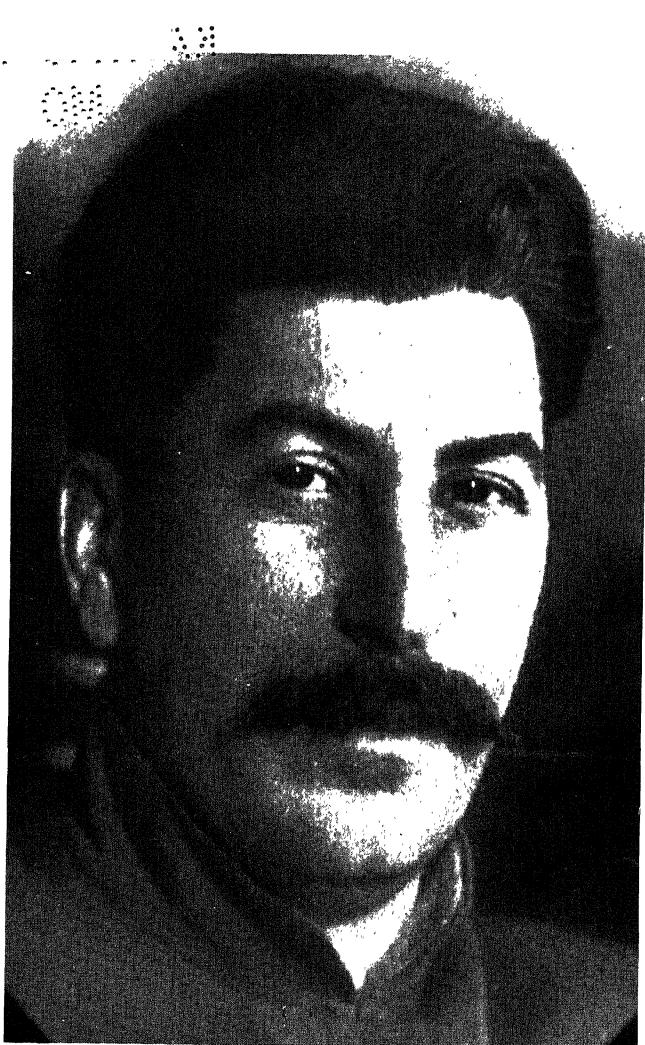
STALIN

**THE CAREER OF A
FANATIC**

TWELVE SECRETS
OF THE CAUCASUS

BY

ESSAD-BEY



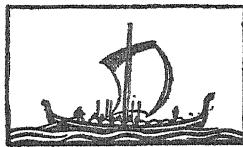
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THE CAREER OF A FANATIC

BY ESSAD-BEY

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY
HUNTLEY PATERSON



1932

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PART ONE

THE CONSPIRATOR

THE TOWN IN THE MOUNTAINS

BEYOND THE GREAT WALL WHICH FROM THE BEGINNING OF TIME has separated Europe from Asia, beyond the legendary region of the Caucasus, lies the rich and fertile district known as Transcaucasia, the cradle of ancient races, prehistoric civilizations, and myths pale and hoary with antiquity. Georgia, the home of Medea, the famous witch of classic lore, occupies the centre of this vast area, and its bright and smiling hills and valleys stretch between the gloomy shores of the Black Sea, so rich in legend, and the sunburnt steppes of Azerbaijan. Vineyards, medieval fortresses, romantic gorges, and towns which look like villages, adorn the landscape.

These towns and villages, these medieval fortresses, gorges, and orchards are inhabited by the Georgian people, the most ancient and aristocratic of Transcaucasian races. Since the reign of the mythical Queen Tamara and the days of the ancient kings, princes, and priests, neither the country itself nor its inhabitants have undergone any very great change. At the end of the nineteenth century Georgia formed part of the Russian Empire. Across the bleak snow-capped summits of the Caucasus and through their myriad passes the Russians fought their way step by step until at last they became masters of the country.

The great military road of Georgia runs all the way from Vladikavkaz, the city of the Cossacks, through the mountains, to the distant city of Tphilisi (Tiflis), the capital of the country.

It was a century ago that old King Heraclius himself summoned the Tsar and his army to his help, and later on his suc-

sor, George, renounced his crown in favour of the great White Tsar, and with it abandoned all his responsibilities towards the Georgian people. Ever since that time the Viceroys appointed by the Ruler of all the Russias have been established in old Tiflis, and Persians, Turks, and Tatars have ceased to plunder the land. Roads were built, schools were opened, and cities sprang up where only villages had stood before. The native princes visited the Tsar's Court, received honours and titles, and incidentally obtained a glimpse of Europe. They swore fealty to the Tsar and, stirred and stimulated by what they had seen, returned to their native hills and dales, where they proceeded to build themselves new palaces and furnished them with European furniture. But in all other respects they continued to live the life of their feudal forefathers.

The Tsar regarded it as his most sacred duty to protect the rights of the Georgian princelings, who represented the oldest families in his Empire. These princelings and nobles were known as Tavadi and Aznauri, and lived in Tiflis, at the Court of the Russian Viceroy, or in the towns or on their country estates.

Georgian wine used to flow in streams in the cellars of the old feudal strongholds; there were banquets and festivities, and every evening the wild melodies of the mountain dances would be heard; while once a week the prince, accompanied by his nobles, went hunting. Hunting is the chief pastime of the Georgians. The strongholds and castles formed centres round which, in the villages and scattered amid the fields and forests, lived the common people, the peasants and labourers. When a prince, clad in his white Circassian uniform with a gold dagger in his belt, rode on horseback through the streets, the people cheered and bowed before him, making his eyes sparkle with pride. He graciously accepted their homage as his due, and the people paid it, while fully conscious of their own freedom and dignity. There was no barrier separating the people from their princes, for the feudal life of the nobility was mingled with the patriarchal traditions of the immemorial East. Like their princes the people of

Georgia loved hunting, wine, and dancing, and like their betters they could freely indulge their tastes, for the valleys of Georgia are rich and fertile and the soul of the people is noble and chivalrous. It was only in the towns and cities, where old traditions had gradually died out, that a new type had come into existence.

In the few factories and workshops and in the narrow streets of the towns, a new generation was springing up who, although the blood of their fathers still ran hot in their veins, were nevertheless acquiring a taste for other pastimes than hunting and dancing.

The river Kur, a mountain stream, flows through the ancient city of Tiflis, and along its banks the Viceroys of the Tsar laid the main artery of the land, the great Transcaucasian Railway which runs from Baku to Batum. North and south of Tiflis and along the railway line and the river, are the low hills and narrow gorges clothed in luxurious vegetation which form the remote and picturesque spurs of the Caucasus Mountains.

On the banks of the Kur, forty-eight miles from Tiflis, and on the line to Batum, stands the town of Gori, surrounded by vineyards, orchards, and green fields. It is hundreds of years old and was once the stronghold of the Kings of Karthli, the chieftains of Gori. Mountain peaks capped with snow all the year round and gloomy masses of rock form the background of the landscape in the neighbourhood of the town, while the country roundabout is almost tropical in appearance. The inhabitants who dwell among their vineyards in sight of the snow-capped mountains have in their blood both the ice of the Caucasian glaciers and the fire of the Georgian grape.

Centuries ago, in their frontier stronghold, the people of Gori used to defend the Kingdom of Karthli, the domain of the Georgian Kings of the Bagratid dynasty. And to this day, long after the wild mountain tribes have been for ever driven back into their gorges, the blood still flows fierce and fiery in their veins. Many of Georgia's warriors, knights, and champions of liberty were natives of this town.

Forty years ago Gori with its ten thousand inhabitants was the seat of a great general, His Serene Highness Simeon Amilakhvari, who was probably the most noble of all the Caucasian princes. The family of Amilakhvari was very famous and extremely old. From his palace, which stood in the middle of a large royal park, the prince ruled the city and his vast estates in the neighbourhood of Gori and in the outlying provinces of Imeretia and Karthli. Prince Amilakhvari was a god-child of the Tsar, and all his children were christened by the Tsar himself. Alexander III paid him a visit at his palace in Gori, and the room in which he slept was left untouched for many a long year afterwards. The prince was an enthusiastic hunter; princes and noblemen came to visit him from all parts of Georgia, and their hunting parties sailed down the Kur on huge rafts. But in spite of his connexion with the Tsar, and his descent from the ancient Kings of Georgia, Amilakhvari, like all the princes of that country, was a simple and democratic man. True, in the room in his castle which the Tsar had occupied, a light was kept constantly burning in memory of his exalted visitor; he also occasionally had the honour of receiving a letter written in His Imperial Majesty's own hand; but, if on returning home from the chase he suddenly happened to notice that his princely boots had been cut during the hunt, he would jump from his horse in the middle of the town, and walk along the street to the one and only cobbler of Gori, old Vissario Djugashvili, and would ask him to put a rough patch into the boots which he always obtained from Paris for fabulous sums. The cobbler's little son, Zozo, would run into the house and fetch a small rug, so that the prince could set his foot down while he waited. But Amilakhvari was not always in an amiable and pleasant frame of mind. As the only remaining prince in the Caucasus he had the right to keep his own bodyguard and they constituted the last remnant of his sovereign power. This regiment of soldiers, which was attached to him personally, took orders only from him, and fought only for him, consisted of wild Lesghians and Highland Georgians.

One fine day the new military representative for the district of Gori appeared in the city. He was an officer of the rank of colonel and soon came to loggerheads with the prince's bodyguard, whom he impudently ordered to move their stables. When the prince heard the news he was mad with rage. He immediately put on his white Circassian uniform, seized his arms, tugged furiously at his long, white Francis-Joseph moustache, and, escorted by his nobles, rode down into the city. There he had the military representative seized and bound, had his breeches taken down, and looked on quite unmoved while a couple of the men of his bodyguard publicly thrashed the villain. The people of Gori were also interested spectators of the proceeding. Among the crowd was little Zozo, the son of the cobbler Djugashvili, a boy with a luxuriant crop of hair, a low forehead, small coal-black eyes, and little fists ever ready to fight but determined to have nothing whatever to do with cobbling. Prince Simeon Amilakhvari could afford to thrash military officials, and the unfortunate delinquent, who had incurred his displeasure, was transferred elsewhere. The Tsar, however, wrote the prince a personal letter, the contents of which immediately became known in Gori.

“Dear Amilakhvari,” it ran, “another time please do not thrash one of my officials but just write to me. If a man does not suit you, I will have him transferred.”

Such was the life of Prince Amilakhvari, general, friend of the Tsar, and ruler of Gori. He was a noble knight, a brave man, and a true Georgian. Hunting, dancing, mirth, and jollity reigned at his Court. One feast followed another. The Lesghian regiment of cavalry secured him peace and quiet, and it was only at rare intervals that His Serene Highness left his palace, in order, at the request of the Tsar, to quell an insurrection in Baku, to present himself at the Imperial Court, or to go to Paris to buy himself a new carriage or two.

Meanwhile, almost under the shadow of the palace, in the little workshop of the cobbler Djugashvili, the boy Zozo was

growing up, and was refusing to put his hand to the awl. Amilakhvari's fame and bearing were among the boy's first impressions. Perhaps it was the old prince's example, the example of the born ruler, which made young Zozo, the cobbler's son, choose the path along which he forgot his name, his home, and his father's workshop, and ultimately became Joseph Stalin, the Russian Dictator, the ruler over a sixth of the world's surface.

Joseph Djugashvili was born at Gori in Georgia in 1879. His father was a true Georgian who hailed from the rugged highland district of northern Transcaucasia, where the plain gradually merges into beetling rocky cliffs and whose inhabitants, the Mthiuleti (Highland Georgians) have been accustomed to the use of arms from time immemorial. But Vissario Djugashvili was no warrior. He was by calling a cobbler, and belonged to the ancient Georgian caste of the Makalaks, the craftsmen and tradesmen.

True, he had not been a cobbler all his life. People who knew the family well declare that in his youth he left the village of Dido-Lilo, where his parents lived, and wandered into the rugged mountain country of Ossetia. There he led the fine free life of a mountain brigand, but was banished by the Ossetes. He abducted a girl and made his way to Tskhinvali near Gori. And it was only later on that he became a real craftsman, a Georgian Makalak, in Gori.

The Makalaks of Georgia are a curious race of men who have little in common with the agricultural and feudal people about them. In the old days they lived in the few urban centres of the country and were the only class of the community to defy the feudal traditions of their race.

When the King or a noble Tavad was in need of money he went to his Makalaks, who were the only commoners allowed to keep slaves. The letters of the Georgian princes to the Makalaks of Tiflis are extant to this day. One of these letters reads as follows: "Most honoured craftsmen, I am in need of a hundred gold pieces to pay the Lesghians, who are threatening to

raid my estate. Lend them to me and I call God to witness that I shall repay you as soon as I can. But I beg you not to let anyone know that I cannot at the moment raise a hundred gold pieces, for if the world knew of this it would be a great disgrace."

Thus did the Kings write to their Makalaks, and the Makalaks lent the money, continued to ply their various trades, hoarded up their wealth, and left it to their princes to wage war. It is only during the last twenty or thirty years that the position of the Makalaks has been undermined. Successful Armenian merchants destroyed their prosperity; the princes no longer needed them; and the Russians refused to respect their hereditary rights. Whereas the princes, the nobles, and the peasants profited by Russian rule, the Makalaks had every reason to complain of it. The Russians did not recognize their ancient and traditional privileges and they were compelled to abandon the leading role in the economic life of the country to the nobles and the Armenians, with the result that eventually all they could do was to glare sullenly and anxiously out upon the new Age of hustle from the windows of their stuffy little shops in the bazaars of Tiflis or in the broad streets of the old towns.

Even the master-cobbler of Gori fared no better than the rest. Now and again old Amilakhvari would ride past his shop; the street urchins would play barefoot round his house; and day and night he would bend over his soles singing plaintive Georgian ditties as he worked. But Zozo, his little boy, never sang songs. He loafed about the streets barefoot, with a fur cap on his head, and fought bloody fights with the other boys of the neighbourhood. The streets of Gori are broad, the houses stand far apart, and the orchards which surround the town come right down to the streets. It was in these orchards that Zozo spent his childhood days, and he was but seldom to be seen at home or in his father's workshop. The living-rooms in the houses of Gori are mean, dark, and small. Even the well-to-do citizens prefer to spend their days on their verandas and their nights on their flat roofs, and naturally the boys are even more seldom

to be found inside the houses. In spring when the trees begin to burgeon and the melting snow swells the waters of the Kur, Zozo was able to go even farther afield. He would sail on a raft to one of the neighbouring villages, or stroll along the river bank to Barshomi, the summer residence of the Georgian and Russian princes. Nor was Barshomi a fairy city merely in comparison with the provincial backwater of Gori: in the midst of its vast gardens stood splendid villas and palaces. Every year Russian Grand Dukes used to come down from the distant north, and during their stay a company of Cossacks would surround the settlement.

When the village boys from Gori appeared on the streets of Barshomi, they found the villas guarded by smart and stalwart Cossacks. Some saturnine Grand Duke, in fear of his life, had arrived, and the Cossacks lashed out with their whips at anyone who tried to break through their cordon till blood flowed beneath their blows.

Whether little Zozo had already felt the weight of a Cossack's hand in those early days it is impossible to say, but that he learnt to know it all too well later on is beyond doubt.

The luxurious settlement of Barshomi with its royal palaces, however, did not attract the adventurous son of the cobbler for long. He felt more drawn to the mountains in the north which formed the southern boundary of Ossetia, a district inhabited by a mixed population consisting partly of Ossetes and partly of Georgians, living in small scattered highland villages. Stalin himself is half Ossete, his mother being descended from that mysterious Indo-Germanic race, which at some period in the dim and distant past had been driven from the plains up into the mountains of the Caucasus and has to this day managed to eke out a frugal existence in the rugged uplands. Nobody knows who the Ossetes are or whence they came; for ages they have inhabited the rugged mountains and, next to the Georgians, they are the most intelligent of the Caucasian races. It is from these two different and mysterious peoples, who are funda-

mentally unlike each other, that Stalin, the most remarkable among the present rulers of the world, is descended.

But the fairylike enchantment of the city of Gori, its large and pleasant gardens, its mild Khedistav wine, and the good cheer of the inhabitants of this oldest of Georgian towns, left little mark on Stalin's character. He was far more influenced by the gloomier aspects of the place, by the sombre ruins of Uplistsikhe, the catacomb city dug out by unknown hands, over which the spirits of darkness hovered, and by the famous citadel of Gori-Djvari, which is both fortress and church in one, and said to have been built by the legendary Queen Tamara. It was thither that Stalin used to wander when the nights were hot and stuffy, to the outskirts of the city and the place where the waters of the two mountain streams, the Liakhva and the Kur, join in one. Nothing ever happened in Gori-Djvari, and even to this day only a few pilgrims ever visit the place.

In the middle of this ghostly half-ruined citadel stands the great silver cross containing the relics of St. George. At that time the sanctuary was guarded only by one old monk, who used to tell of the days when the people of Gori always fled to the unfailing protection of the cross whenever their town was menaced by great danger or by floods; for in the olden days, when floods still constituted a serious menace, the citadel and its cross stood out like an island in mid-ocean. As time passed by, however, the floods grew rarer and the pilgrims to the shrine became few and far between. Only little Zozo had the courage to scramble up the steep incline and gaze on the spot whose mysteries were chanted by Georgia's wandering minstrels, the native Mestviri of Gori.

There is a pious legend which has been handed down in connexion with the citadel and the foundation of the city of Gori. "Once upon a time," sing the Mestviri, "the great Queen Tamara went a-hunting in the woods on the banks of the Kur. And lo! the wild animals came reverently up to her and waited for her golden arrows to pierce their hearts. After she had

hunted for a long while the Queen at last sat down to rest on the bank of the river, where the waters of the Kur and the Liakhva join in one. All about her sat the princes, the pashas, and the beks, gazing anxiously up at her, for on a sudden her face had clouded and her brow was lined with care. Her favourite falcon had remained perched on a steep ledge of rock on the other side of the river, holding his prey fast in his talons and showing no sign of wishing to return to his mistress. 'Who will fetch me my falcon?' she cried. 'Whoever brings him back may ask me any boon he craves!'

"The princes, pashas, and nobles sat sad and silent, their eyes cast down to the ground. It was springtime and the swollen waters of the mountain streams dashed along in a foaming, roaring torrent. There was not a man among them who dared to swim across that raging flood. Suddenly a young prince sprang to his feet and bowed low before the Queen; a moment later he had plunged into the seething waters and the whole Court looked on with fear and terror as he struggled in the torrent. At last he reached the other bank, seized the falcon, secured it fast, and battled his way stoutly back across the stream. On reaching land he knelt before the Queen and handed her the falcon. The Queen's face lit up with joy and stretching out her hand she took the falcon on her fist, and waited for the youth to ask his boon. What did he want? Money? Land? Honours?

"None of those things do I crave, O Queen!" replied the hero. 'All I ask is that for one night I may be your master!' Dead silence reigned around, and the courtiers blushed for shame. But the Queen rose to her feet, calm and composed. She did not call for her executioner nor her head jailer, but stepped back a pace. 'The Queen's word is her bond!' she replied coldly. 'I shall wait for you tonight!'

"When the youth had departed, the Queen knelt down and prayed to the Blessed Virgin of Gelati, to the Cross and to all the Saints, to cause a miracle to happen that her honour might be saved. And the whole Court joined in her prayer; bishops,

princes, and nobles one and all knelt down and prayed that the Queen's honour might be spared. When night had fallen, Queen Tamara in all her dazzling beauty awaited the youth in the shade of the old trees that stood on the hill by the river bank. He came and spent the whole night with her. But her honour was saved notwithstanding. For a miracle happened, and in the night the youth was striken with impotence, and lay weak and timid beside Queen Tamara. Thus did the Blessed Virgin of Gelati save the honour of Queen Tamara and punish the impudent youth. And in memory of this miracle the Queen built the citadel and city of Gori and, on the spot where the miracle took place, she erected the Gori-Djvari, the holy cross of silver."

It was at the foot of this cross that Zozo used to sit on calm summer evenings, gazing down on the city where he could see the stronghold and palace of His Serene Highness Prince Amilakhvari, as well as his father's little workshop. The cobbler's trade was going from bad to worse, and the less work he had to do the less did he sing. But seldom now was he heard crooning the old Georgian lays as he bent over the worn soles of his customers' boots. For anybody in the district who wanted to buy a pair of soft Georgian boots with saffian soles no longer went to Vissario Djugashvili's shop; in the old royal city of Tiflis a fat Armenian was now installed who had opened a Caucasian Boot Factory and grown rich overnight.

Old Djugashvili and his workshop were on the high road to ruin. The time came when he had to sell his leather and then his tools one by one. But even this did not mend matters. There was nothing to be done and the craftsman was faced with starvation. In those days young Zozo had not yet read his Marx, otherwise he would have understood that what was happening in his home was the "historically determined struggle between Capitalism and home industries." So he loafed half starved about Djvari and gazed for hours at a time down on Prince Amilakhvari's palace.

At last his father pulled himself together and came to a deci-

sion. He renounced his rights as a free Georgian Makalak, broke up his home in Gori, and went with his wife and child down the river to Tiflis, where the fat Armenian Adelkhanov was manufacturing boots, and obtained employment with him. Thus Djugashvili, the craftsman, became Djugashvili, the proletarian, and his son Zozo was turned into a guttersnipe, one of the crowd of street urchins who enlivened this most beautiful of Russian cities with their songs, their pranks, their squabbles, and their chatter, creating disturbances everywhere and forming as much a part of the town as the sky above or the background of mountains in the distance. At the age of fourteen, therefore, the boy from Gori became a loafer and parasite in a great city.

The Georgians, even those of the lower classes, are inspired by a genuine love of culture. In almost every village there are people who have passed out of the secondary school, duly certificated, and among the meanest of the peasants at least fifty per cent can read and write, a very high proportion for the Near East. Zozo, too, was obliged to attend school, and naturally a Georgian school. It was only in later years that the future dictator of Russia learnt to speak the Russian language. He was not a good scholar, being far more eager to run the streets with other urchins than to attend to his books. He had brought the love of unfettered freedom with him from Gori, and even life in the great city did not succeed in stifling it. In spite of all old Vissario's exhortations, he refused to become either a scholar or a bookworm.

The bright and cheerful royal city on the Kur extends an eager and friendly welcome to any stranger, and its future master was made no exception to the rule. He found a refuge within its walls, but he and his father had come to the city as outcasts from their own class. And it was here, in the narrow streets of Tiflis, among the motley crowd of its strange inhabitants, that Joseph Djugashvili learnt the alphabet of life in the hard and trying school of hunger.

It has often been asserted that Stalin is the most uncultured, the most primitive of all the Red leaders. But this is not true, or at least it is only partly true. For although he learnt but little under the rod of the schoolmaster, he diligently absorbed the wisdom of Georgian song and saga. And with the aroma of this Georgian poetry, he also inhaled the atmosphere of the streets of Tiflis, with all the magic city contained of cynicism, brutality, and waggishness. The people of Tiflis are a race apart, and Zozo Djugashvili became one of them. The peculiar quality of Tiflis, half Asiatic and half European, became stamped on Stalin's character, and although he afterwards travelled through the length and breadth of Russia he never lost it; it remained indelibly printed on his soul until at last, behind the stout walls of the Kremlin, he became the ruler of Red Russia.

THE NOVICE

THE ORIENTAL BOOT FACTORY OF THE ARMENIAN ADELKHANOV was situated hard by Prince Orbeliani's famous Tiflis sulphur baths on the bank of the Kur, right in the heart of the Oriental quarter of the city. Here, until he became a pupil in the seminary of the Georgian priests, young Stalin spent his time as a street beggar and ragamuffin.

He had left Gori and its church school at fourteen, and simple provincial that he was, he spent hours sauntering through the famous Bazaar, little by little adapting himself to the polish of the Oriental capital.

Right and left of him the heavily laden little donkeys of the East trotted by, the camels majestically swayed past, the minstrels wandered through, and the hawkers plied their trade. In the Asiatic quarter of Tiflis the streets are narrow, and, when a camel comes sailing down, minstrels and hawkers must quickly flatten themselves against the sides of the houses. Every feature of true Oriental life is to be found in these streets, and the zenith is reached in the famous Bazaar on the Maidan. The Bazaar is the heart of Tiflis. Here people meet together and spend the day. It is at once a club, a stock exchange, and a pleasure resort. The inhabitant of Tiflis wanders about the Bazaar from early morning to late at night; it is here that he earns his livelihood, and here that he spends his earnings with that levity of which the Georgian alone, in all the world, is capable.

Hour after hour Stalin would saunter through the streets of the craftsmen—the armourers, shoemakers, and tailors—then

he would rest awhile in the shade of an awning, and at night, in the hope of picking up something, hang round the customers at the little cellar taverns, where large helpings of mutton, rice, and Georgian wine were to be had for a mere song. The tavern or *dukhan* is the joy of the inhabitants of Tiflis, and everybody, whether Russian, Georgian, Jew, Turk, or Armenian, eagerly resorts to it. There blind musicians may be seen playing Persian melodies and singing Georgian songs about the splendour of the divine Tamara, while dark little gipsies and Kurdish girls dance the "Daulur" or the "Bukhna." The singers clap their hands to their ears and in sad ecstatic voices sing, "Arise, O Tamara!" and the past glories of Georgia and her hopes for the future find an echo in these lays. Feasting goes on until the early hours of the morning; wine flows in streams; and vast quantities of roast mutton, cheese, salad, vegetables, and rice, prepared in countless different ways, are consumed. The wine is drunk from huge horns which have to be emptied at one draught. Again and again the *Tamada*, or leader of the feasts, fills the horns. The Georgian is passionately fond of drinking, and drinks a great deal but never alone. His table must always be thronged with friends. Princes and porters (often enough the same person is both) have not the least objection to sitting down at the same table and drinking till dawn of day.

But the King of the Tiflis streets, the scion and lord of the bazaars and the dukhans, is the *kinto*, a curious figure. He and his like constitute a class apart, that is never to be met with outside the capital of Georgia. What is a *kinto*? It is hard to say. He is a Bohemian, an outcast, a jester, a wise man, and a cynic all in one. A *kinto* is half poet, half pickpocket. He is the expression of the streets of Tiflis and their most striking feature. It would be difficult to discover to what race he really belongs. He is simply a child of the masses of Tiflis, the jolly, laughing, singing, and often starving people of the Tiflis streets. No one knows what the *kinto* does, what he lives on, and where he sleeps. He is to be met with everywhere, a picturesque, graceful figure, of

uncertain age, with laughing lips, crafty eyes, and a tiny hat stuck on the back of his head. The kinto knows everything and is prepared to discuss anything. He plays the part of newspaper, whether as a purveyor of political and local news, as a critic of literature, science, and art, or a feuilleton writer. He holds the ear of Tiflis. And he creates the atmosphere he chooses, blasting many a good reputation and saving many a bad one. The ways of the kinto are inscrutable. He is witty and can tell the most fantastic stories, is a bit of a bawd, and something of a romantic hero. In fact he is everything, this street loafer and parasite of the magic city of Tiflis!

And Stalin was a kinto before his line of life led him into the sombre precincts of the Georgian seminary. For months he sponged on the people of Tiflis in the streets and in the public bars, enriched his vocabulary with Georgian obscenities and scraps of Armenian and Russian, and gradually began to feel quite at home in the gay and insolent school of street life.

To this day his experience as a kinto has left him with that cynical smile and crafty look which strike all who meet him. The streets of Tiflis make the kinto hard, jolly, and tough as iron, and to the end of his days he retains this sturdiness and absence of shame, this ability in season and out of season to laugh cynically at his own and others' misfortunes and to snap his fingers at life and death.

Not without reason did Lenin say: "Stalin is too coarse and brutal to lead the Party." But maybe it was precisely the qualities he had acquired as a kinto that led this sombre and ferocious Georgian on to victory. For it is only outwardly that the life of the kinto seems jolly and free from care.

The fourteen-year-old Stalin starved at first on the streets of the royal city; he had to fight many a hard fight in the dark cellar taverns, with kintos who for the most part were his seniors and determined not to share with anyone their right to jests and to the remains of food. In the dank narrow courts along the bank of the Kur, young Zoso learnt from his com-

panions the great Caucasian art of suddenly drawing the dagger from its sheath and wrapping a cloth about the left hand; thus armed he could bravely and ruthlessly fight the foe. The kintos often had bloody fights among themselves, though only rarely did the battles of this body of half-starved outcasts reach the ears of the police. And Zozo, the hungriest of them all, who was still almost a child, also possessed a sharp dagger and a *bashlik*, or head-cloth, which he wrapped about his left hand to serve him as a shield.

While he was still in Gori, Zozo had already learnt to hit the bull's eye by flinging his dagger from a distance of over ten paces. And this sturdy provincial, the son of a Georgian highlander, did not long remain in a state of tutelage to the street beggars of Tiflis. Soon the boy of fourteen became a fully qualified member of the free guild of kintos, though this led to all manner of evil consequences. The rise of the kinto to the position of King of the Streets of Tiflis was accompanied by constant fights and escapades. For the King of the Kintos is a most important personality in the capital. The summit of this rise to dignity and power consists of the annual public fight which the kintos hold in some field near Tiflis, after the manner of the tournaments and bouts of the days of chivalry.

At the time when Stalin was roaming the streets of Tiflis, this tournament was a social event. Generals and princes came to watch it, and rich merchants would make wagers among themselves on this or that "hero." Garlanded with flowers and carried on a ceremonial litter, the victor would be borne through the town and for a whole year was honoured as a sort of King of the Streets. The fight itself was extremely brutal. Formed into two groups, the kintos, armed with sticks and stones, would advance under the leadership of an experienced bandit and proceed to belabour their opponents frantically and try to drive them into the river. But victory was never gained without considerable bloodshed, and often the most solemn obsequies were celebrated on the morrow for kintos

who had been exceptionally heroic. In any case the kintos were allowed free play on these tournament days, and knew how to take full advantage of their right. Permission to take an official part in the great fight was the first sign that a kinto had reached the age of manhood, and Stalin risked everything to win this recognition as soon as possible. As a matter of fact the fourteen-year-old "Mthiuleti," or Georgian highlander, with muscles like steel and the capacity, proved in numberless street fights, to endure blows without flinching, was very quickly admitted into the ranks of the rowdies. Zozo accepted this distinction with extreme unconcern. In the Caucasus a boy of fourteen is no longer a youngster, and even in those early days Stalin was not one to give expression to his joy. On the day of the tournament he was one of the first to appear on the scene, in a ragged black blouse, or *beshmet*, tightly drawn in at the waist, and his tiny kinto hat on the back of his head—every inch a hero. Gradually the combatants collected on the vast field, the pick of the kintos; and all around, on the edge of the field, stood their noble patrons, the merchants and army officers.

The contest was opened by an exchange of witticisms, for in the matter of vulgar wit the kinto is a pastmaster. "Have you come here to learn how to run?" shouted one side. "Pah! our spit's enough to beat you," came the reply. Then, step by step, they approached each other, the leaders in the van. Among the foremost of those who followed was young Zozo, his fists hard clenched. The first blows were exchanged. The kintos flung themselves savagely on their opponents, and their battle-cries relieved the suspense of the noble spectators who, eagerly following the spectacle, betted huge sums on the issue.

It is impossible to say how many kintos lost their teeth that day on the field of honour, or how many heroes were carried home with broken ribs by faithful friends, but among those who had suffered most was young Stalin, who had bravely borne his baptism of fire. Covered with blood and battered from head to foot, he was carried through the streets past the royal baths

and the factory of the Armenian Adelkhanov, to his home in the hovel of Djugashvili the leather-worker. The old cobbler was obliged to wash his son very carefully before he could discover where he was wounded. The wounds proved slight, but they made the old man pause and think. The sturdy Georgian countryman, the proud Mthiuleti, did not like the idea of his son mixing with the disreputable kintos of the lowest slum taverns, although fundamentally Georgia knows nothing of class distinctions and antagonisms. Even the lowest of Adelkhanov's workmen regarded himself above all as a Georgian, a man in whose veins flowed the blood of the old heroes, nobles, and Christians of his country. Nevertheless, Zozo's association with the egregious kintos was far from pleasing to the old man. But what could he do? He quickly dismissed the idea of sending his son back to his ancestral home in the village of Dido-Lilo, for in Dido-Lilo everybody became a dull-witted son of the soil, while in Gori, in proud Amilakhvari's city, Zozo had at least attended the church school, and was already half-way to being a scholar. It is the ambition of every Georgian to make his son either an officer or a scholar. But Stalin could never have become an officer; the road to the fine uniform was barred to this son of a cobbler from his very birth. But he could be a scholar. Every Georgian could become a scholar, and this was the goal at which most of them aimed. Among the intelligentsia of the country every class of the community is represented, and from the very earliest times this feudal land has contrived to cultivate a true democracy of the intellect. There were innumerable public and aristocratic schools in Georgia for the education of the people, but in the mind of Djugashvili, the cobbler, culture was traditionally connected with priestly learning. If his son could not be a warrior, he must at least be a priest, a pious minister of God among men. There was nothing to prevent him from becoming a priest.

Now in the centre of Tiflis, hard by the Soldiers' Market, on the broad thoroughfare known as Pushkin Street, stood the

square, barrack-like building of the Georgian Theological Seminary, an institution to which any boy could gain admittance, and the shelter of whose walls he left either as a priest or a schoolteacher. It provided free education, for the State defrayed the expenses of training its future priests. Moreover, text-books and food were also given gratis, and the student was trained to acquire knowledge, to pray, and to obey, in fact to practise all the virtues required in a prospective official in the state department of religion. Small wonder then that the seminary became an asylum for all those who found themselves thrown on the streets of Tiflis without a crust of bread to their name and who had no desire either to join the kintos or sink to the level of peasants. So in 1893, at the beginning of the scholastic year, Vissario Djugashvili took his son to the gloomy building. The priests were extremely reluctant to take Zozo under their care. They already had more than they needed of such ragamuffins, and it was only after endless bowing and scraping on the part of the old cobbler, and the mild appeals of friends of a slightly more exalted station in life than the former provincial shoemaker, that Joseph Djugashvili was ultimately taken into the barrack-like building in Pushkin Street as a candidate for priestly honours.

The Georgian Theological Seminary is the guardian of Georgian faith. The hoary traditions of the Georgian Church, which dates from the days of Saint Nino and has survived to this day after centuries of brilliance and misery, bloodshed and martyrdom, had been rudely shaken at the end of the nineteenth century. The brutal ecclesiastical policy of the Tsarist Government did more to destroy these traditions than any other anti-clerical movement in the world. As soon as the Tsars occupied Georgia, they inaugurated a system for the forcible Russification of the national Church. In spite of the most solemn promises, they robbed it of everything of which a Church can well be robbed, even to its language and its right of self-government. It should be remembered that in Georgia the Church was

the intellectual centre of the land. Without it the country would long since have ceased to exist. The Church, with its Byzantine, Greek-Orthodox form of Christianity, embodies and explains the whole history of Georgia. Surrounded as it was by Islamic peoples, this little Christian State was obliged to fight for its faith, which also meant its independence, in innumerable bloody wars. In the course of its history, which is unique in this respect, its bishops were often forced to abandon the crozier for the sword, and as pious knights at the head of a feudal-ecclesiastical army to defend their country against the infidel. In Georgia it was often difficult to know where the warrior ended and the priest began. But the constant menace to which it was exposed conduced to preserve the religious unity of the country, and in all its history no trace can be found of any sectarian movement or dispute between the princes of the Church, or of any struggle between the spiritual and temporal powers. True, the Church constituted a powerful state within the State, but no bishop ever attempted to defy the King, and never did the Catholicos exert his power against his sovereign lord. For the Georgian Church was also strictly feudal. The Catholicos, who, as a rule, was related to the King, was supported by an army of noble ecclesiastical warriors, slaves, and peasants, who were in every respect identical with the vassals of a prince. And this largely medieval state of affairs lasted in Georgia until the beginning of the nineteenth century, when, under the threat of Islamic invasion, all classes, with the King and the Catholicos at their head, placed their country under the suzerainty of Russia.

It was from this moment that the Russification of the Georgian Church began, and like other attempts at Russification, it drove ever larger numbers of the people over to the opposition. In the very earliest years of the union of Georgia with Russia, the independence of the Georgian Church was abolished, and from that moment the Exarch of Georgia was a Russian priest nominated by the Tsar, who deliberately promoted the inter-

ests of Russia. The use of the Georgian language in the Church was forbidden and ecclesiastical Slavic made to take its place, while the whole Georgian hierarchy was subordinated to the Russian authorities. As a result of this policy there were constant bloody religious rebellions in the first half of the nineteenth century, which were always repressed with the brutality characteristic of all colonizers. At last, in the second half of the nineteenth century, the Georgian bishops surrendered and consented to become the pliant instruments of Tsarist policy. Their submission, however, was more apparent than real. Within the Church, in the cloistered monasteries and among the rural clergy, discontent was still seething though the days of open religious rebellion were over, and a large section of the clergy continued to regard the Russians as a race of hateful and brutal oppressors. This was true more particularly of the petty clergy, for the majority of the simple village popes hailed from the Georgian Theological Seminary, that is to say from the refuge of the lowest class of the population. Like the priests, this class also had every reason to be dissatisfied with the Tsarist regime. For, unlike the nobility, the masses, as we have already seen, lost much, if not all, as the result of the union with Russia. By the grace of the Tsar their sons were granted but one form of practical instruction—they were taught the Russian language.

In Georgia as elsewhere the nineteenth century was a period of social transformation. The old piety which had been deprived of its meaning by the Tsarist policy, began to die out, and the most promising pupils of the Church were forced to go over to the one and only anti-Tsarist radical group that had come into existence in the country. It was from the ranks of those who had once been pupils in the Theological Seminary that Georgia's most famous radical politicians hailed, such men as Yordania, Chkheidze, and Chkheneli who played a leading part in the first Russian Revolution.

It was also within the walls of the Georgian Theological Seminary that the most distinguished of its pupils, Zozo Dju-

gashvili-Stalin, was initiated into the mysteries of revolutionary doctrine.

During his very first year at the Seminary, Stalin came into contact with the modest attempts at revolutionary and nationalist organizations in this institution. Instead of the catechism, little red-bound pamphlets were distributed and read during the long evenings, and the minds of the young aspirants, familiar with the subtleties of dogma and schooled to understand them, applied themselves enthusiastically to mastering the doctrines of revolution. The intellectual demands made upon them by Marxian dogmas were precisely on a level with the complicated technicalities and abstractions of theological acrobatics. In both realms of thought they were met by problems far removed from the sphere of everyday life in Georgia, which as yet was neither industrialized nor theocratic. But very soon they saw that the catechism of revolution was becoming to them what the Christian catechism was to their teachers, the steady guiding star of their lives. Those who distributed these red pamphlets among the future generation of priests well knew what they were about, for if any understanding of Marx's abstract principles was to be found in Georgia at all, it was among the students of theology in the Seminary. General conditions in the country were so different from those prevailing in the states to which Marxism applied that the theoretical idea of a Georgian revolution could be understood only on a theological basis. Instead of the unworldly doctrine of the Church the rising generation of priests was given the equally unworldly but more stimulating and more apparently realistic doctrine of a revolutionary cataclysm.

Those who introduced the gospel of world revolution into the Theological Seminary of Georgia and distributed the red pamphlets among the poorest of its pupils (and they were all poor) were themselves not very well read in Marxian doctrine. They were members of the only genuine proletarian body in the city, men working at the Tiflis railway shops, the largest indus-

trial centre in the place. And Stalin never forgot the men who guided his first steps in the domain of practical revolution. They were the railwaymen Arakel Okuashvili, Sturua, Silvester Djibladze, Zako Chodrizhvili, George Chkheidze, Mikho Borshorishvili, and Nipua, all pure Georgians and proletarians.

But the "priest" was not immediately allowed access to the Temple of Revolution, the house of the workman Sturua. A long period of probation lay before him. People who knew him intimately at this time declare that Stalin used to sit poring over books the whole night through, like one in an ecstasy, absorbing this new revelation from the Western world which was so difficult to grasp. Here, in these thin pamphlets, he found, expressed in Russian, a language he still had some difficulty in reading, what neither his fights among the kintos nor the cold and stilted catechism of the Russian Church had been able to give him. Even at that time there were evident in Stalin those qualities for which Trotsky afterwards took him to task—an overwhelming desire to dominate and to accomplish great feats, combined with a degree of spiritual indolence and stolidity so great that he felt at home only in a point of view established once and for all. This imperturbable inner calm, this capacity to devote himself unreservedly to the practical task in hand, and to the necessity he has recognized and accepted in theory, this freedom from all spiritual constraints and intellectual doubts, and disregard for any provocation from without, are qualities which have remained the lasting possession of the cobbler's son from Gori.

It took Stalin four years of the orderly and secluded life of a scholar and a monk to grasp and master the fundamental principles of the new doctrine. To the workmen in the engine works this diligence on the part of the young seminarist came at an extremely opportune moment. True, they all distributed pamphlets right and left, and were constantly discussing the approaching downfall of the bourgeois world; but only very few among them were able to sign their own names correctly,

or even distinguish between their patron saints Marx and Engels, the heralds of their salvation. And, in spite of his ignorance at that time of practical revolutionary methods, they regarded the sombre, taciturn, and studious seminarist, Stalin, as a fully qualified exponent of Marxian theory, with the result that in 1896, when he was only seventeen, he was admitted into the ranks of Socialism, and became a member of the Tiflis branch of the Social-Democratic Labour Party of Russia.

His progress in his sacerdotal studies was not so rapid, and he was not expected to be ordained priest for two more years. However, it never came to that, for as the recognized theorist of the Tiflis Labour Party, the neophyte was expected to devote all his energies to propaganda for the new gospel. His constituents, the uneducated railway workers, were not in a position to do this. The industrial development of Georgia, a country profoundly medieval in character, directed their thoughts into vague syndicalistic channels, leading to a general cataclysm and world revolution. It was only the brain of the monk Djugashvili, who had been well schooled in dialectics and theology, that was capable of moulding these ideas into a definite, sacrosanct, and inviolable system.

In the year 1896 Stalin founded the first Marxist secret society, known as the Tredozosists, inside the very walls of the Georgian Theological Seminary. The neophyte was already seeking proselytes. At night, by the light of a candle, the seminarists gathered round his bed, men who were destined to be the future lights of the Georgian Church, and also to form the storm troops of the Russian Communist Party. In brief halting phrases, half Russian, half Georgian, he expounded the new doctrine to them, trying to make its maxims, which he did not altogether understand himself, harmonize with the traditional beliefs of his country. He himself has explained his position at this time. "In those days," he says, "I may perhaps have been learned in Marxian lore, but in revolutionary practice I was an infant in arms!"

His pupils, however, understood him very well. As he bent over the candle, his low brow deeply furrowed, his eyes staring in ecstasy, and with his appalling pronunciation tried to master a confused passage in one of the revolutionary authors, they waited in reverent silence, as if for all the world a new revelation were being made to them. No one dared to argue or contradict, for Stalin, who was their senior, would brook neither doubt nor opposition, and his heavy fist knew how to inspire respect for Marxism in those to whom his revolutionary principles failed to appeal. Stalin has never been tolerant.

But the authorities of the Seminary were also anything but tolerant. The scenes just described took place during the vice-royalty of the detested Prince Golitsyn, the main aim of whose policy was sternly to repress any sign of nationalism or liberalism among the people of Transcaucasia. It was the bounden duty of the directors of the Seminary to train god-fearing officials and, above all, ruthlessly to combat every liberal, not to mention revolutionary, tendency. And the staff of teachers was carefully chosen with this end in view. Unlike the neighbouring Armenian Seminary, where the teachers, at all events, were accessible to liberal thought, the staff of the Georgian Seminary, with few exceptions, which became less numerous as time went by, was animated by the most hopeless hypocrisy, an exaggerated fanaticism, and a seeming piety which could only be described as blasphemous.

Truth to tell, the venerable old ecclesiastical traditions of the Georgian Church had been fatally undermined. The midnight meetings of the seminarists in Stalin's room, which were really quite innocent, seemed in the light of the obscurantist hypocrisy of the priests an attack on the foundations of Church and State and a source of danger to the community. Stalin at that time was not a very skilful conspirator, and the authorities somehow discovered that aspirants to the dignity of the Georgian priesthood were not taking the duties of a Christian life seriously enough. Shortly afterwards, they heard, to their horror,

from certain god-fearing members of the teaching staff something about these secret meetings. Finally, blasphemous treatises and red pamphlets were discovered in Stalin's room, and the indignant staff, who in any case had always regarded the reserved and apparently dull-witted young country yokel as capable of any crime, met together to decide what should be done with the heretic. Even in those early days the reverend fathers did not think there was much hope of the fallen sinner returning humbly to the foot of the Cross. "We must remove the black sheep from the fold in order to protect the white lambs," was the final verdict of the pious director of the institution, who was filled with melancholy fears for the spiritual welfare of his flock. And in stern laconic terms the sacred council passed sentence: "The pupil Joseph Djugashvili has been expelled from the institution owing to socialistic heresy."

Thus ended Stalin's ecclesiastical career, and there the matter might have dropped, had not a strange and unforeseen complication arisen. On the day after Djugashvili had been convicted and expelled, the director received a letter from the miscreant containing a detailed denunciation of all those who had attended the nocturnal gatherings, and who, if the Georgian Church was to be saved, should also have been expelled from the Seminary. This circumstantial denunciation, apparently prompted by a low lust of vengeance, had the result of bringing down similar punishment on the heads of Stalin's fellow-delinquents. The priests did not for one moment doubt Stalin's statements; they readily believed him, and a number of pupils were forthwith expelled from the institution for socialistic heresy. Apparently the Tiflis Seminary was a hotbed of atheistic anarchists!

In the eyes of every Georgian, to act as an informer is one of the worst and most shameful deeds of which a man can be guilty, particularly when it is directed against his closest friends and collaborators. Even on the teachers of the Seminary Stalin's action made the most painful impression, and they did not con-

ceal from the culprits the name of the man who was responsible for their expulsion. Soon the whole community knew the facts, and there was great indignation in Socialist circles in Georgia. A Georgian, a member of the Party, had turned traitor! To the simple, honest, and romantically chivalrous Georgians, the very thought of such an act was blasphemy.

In the house of the workman Sturua, who had been the first to introduce Stalin into the revolutionary party, the Court of Honour of the Social-Democratic Party was convened.

"Did you, Comrade, denounce your fellow-socialists and revolutionary schoolmates to the authorities of the Seminary?"

"I did," replied Stalin.

"So you admit it!" cried the chairman in bewilderment.

"Of course," answered Stalin; and suddenly springing to his feet, he bowed his head, as he always did before making a speech, and addressed the meeting in low emphatic tones. "Comrades," he said, "our Party has too few members; the pupils of the Seminary were all destined to be priests and monks—that is to say, servants of the Church. But I have saved them for the Revolution. Now, in view of the decision of the authorities, all access to the ranks of the bourgeoisie has for ever been barred to them, and they have no alternative but to become and to remain our associates! By my denunciation I have added to the Party a dozen learned and faithful revolutionaries, the very men we most require!"

The Court of Honour acquitted Stalin. The Party had urgent need of men like him!

"Could you do something very disgusting, ignoble, and vile for the sake of the Party?" Lenin once asked him. Stalin could. Nor was he mistaken in his judgment of his fellow-students. These former seminarists all became faithful members of the Party and Stalin's supporters in times of the greatest difficulty and danger.

THE REVOLUTIONARY'S FIRST STEPS

STALIN'S CAREER AS A REVOLUTIONARY NOW BEGAN. HIS EXPULSION from the Seminary and the holding of the Court of Honour by his Party formed the starting-point of his life of lawlessness which, with brief interruptions due to imprisonment and exile, lasted until the triumph of the Revolution in the year 1917.

The outlaw's life is a peculiar one, and arduous. It demands extraordinary endurance, patience, circumspection, and above all suspicion and watchfulness on the part of a man even towards his associates and himself. Immediately after his expulsion from the Seminary, Stalin, in spite of his tender years, was called upon to help in the organization of the Es-De (Social-Democratic) and Es-Ar (Social-Revolutionary) parties. In these labours he became immersed in the crowd of Tiflis workmen; he organized a strike and was obliged to go into hiding, and in the space of a few months he learnt to know all the suffering and danger to which an outlawed and revolutionary existence is exposed. He was soon forced to give up his name. In exchange the revolutionaries christened him "Koba," the distinguished one, an appellation by which he was known and under which he worked in the Caucasus up to the time of his final banishment to Siberia.* In addition to this name and his own Christian name of Zozo, he adopted from time to time in various districts and for various reasons either the name of David, Nisheradze, Chichikov, or Ivanovich. And it was only shortly before the

* Koba is also the name of the hero in a well-known drama of chivalry by the Georgian poet Chavachavdze.

War, while he was working for his Party in St. Petersburg, that he took the name of Stalin for the purposes of conspiracy.* Among the old Bolsheviks in the Caucasus he was always, and is still to this day, known as Koba. But his own name of Djugashvili he learnt to forget during the first months of work for his Party.

The little circle of Caucasian workmen and revolutionaries, to whom Stalin owed his awakening, was animated by Social-Democratic ideas. Its leaders, apart from the railway shop workers already mentioned, were Silvester Djibladze, a revolutionary known throughout Georgia, and Stalin's old school friend, the Georgian Lado Ketzkhoveli-Demetriashvili. Like Stalin, Ketzkhoveli had been a pupil in the Seminary. He had also been the first to introduce Zozo, as a youth of seventeen, to the workman Sturua, and the circle of revolutionaries. After he had attained to the summit of power, Stalin once assured that old champion of liberty, Yenukidze, who was also a friend of the old Georgian days, that he had never known a better, more gifted, and more energetic revolutionary than Lado Ketzkhoveli, the prematurely deceased leader of the Caucasus.

The life Stalin was forced to lead in association with these champions of liberty was dangerous and desperate. The members of this illegal party were divided into two classes—those who, supplied with forged passports by the Party, were at liberty to find employment and to earn their living, and those who, without any such passports and deprived of any chance of getting work, devoted the whole of their time to the Party, and who because they were not earning their living were always in a state bordering on starvation. Throughout his life Stalin belonged to the second category; he had neither a calling nor any permanent dwelling place. It was only in the first two years of his work as a revolutionary that he was able to earn a few pence by teaching. Later on he was entirely dependent on the

* Incidentally Lenin was the first to give him this name. As most people know, "Stalin" means "man of steel."

Party, and only in case of extreme need did he accept help from his mother, who, after old Vissario's death, became a seamstress.

The restless life of the professional revolutionary meant wandering from town to town and from one place of concealment to another. Constantly harried and shadowed, Stalin always managed in time to escape the snares set for him, and soon became a pastmaster in the methods of conspiracy and in the art of secret flight. But even the old and experienced hand is no better off than the raw recruit when it comes to the difficulty of finding money and keeping constantly on the move. For there were no funds at the disposal of this revolutionary organization. Even recognized leaders living in western Europe were frequently within an ace of starvation; how much more so, then, must this have been the case with little Koba during the early years. He devoted himself body and soul to the work of the Party, and as a propagandist, ever up against the law, and living the life of a nomad, it was impossible for him to undertake any other kind of work. All the more reason, therefore, why the Party should have provided for their indefatigable worker. But this it had not the power to do. The Party till was empty and Stalin's salary, which was paid him at most irregular intervals, sometimes amounted to no more than the amazingly inadequate sum of fifteen roubles a month, which even for Tiflis was a starvation wage! It was only when he was discharging some special mission and was sent somewhere for propaganda purposes, that the Party granted him a modest sum for travelling expenses. And even in later years, when he was the leader of the Caucasian Bolsheviks, conditions were much the same.

Stalin's life in Tskhinvali, in Gori, and in the Seminary had not been calculated to imbue him with sybaritic tastes, and his wants always have been and still are extremely modest. From his earliest days he had been accustomed to starve and carry on his usual work notwithstanding. Even in times of plenty all he asked for was a piece of sheep's milk cheese, a flat dry Caucasian roll, and only on particularly festive occasions would he spread

a scraping of Caucasian honey on the bread. He was always perfectly satisfied with the meagre sums he received from the Party. Like many of the other revolutionaries, he drank hardly any wine, and was in this respect, for a native of Georgia, the land of heavy drinkers, a conspicuous exception. From the first days of his association with the Party, to the time when he assumed the reins of power over Russia, his life habits and qualities have hardly changed, and his expulsion from the Seminary seems to have marked the final moulding of his character.

In 1899, at the very beginning of Stalin's political career, the Tiflis revolutionaries set themselves a new task which they had never before attempted; they organized the first Caucasian Workers' Strike, at which Stalin made his *début* on the political stage. It was aimed against the most recently established undertaking in the Caucasus—the Tiflis tramways.

Many a long day and night did Koba spend among the conductors, who gathered together in the shops after their day's work and listened silent and open-mouthed to the seminarist's speeches, which they found it so difficult to understand. Truth to tell, the life of a conductor on the Tiflis horse tramways was by no means all beer and skittles. His working day was exceedingly long, almost interminable, and his wages infinitesimal. Nevertheless, it never occurred to the men to call a strike. In their poverty and distress they turned to simpler means of relief. They fraternized with the inspectors and managers and prevailed upon them to share a part of the day's takings with them. To the conductors this seemed a far more profitable and easy way of correcting social injustice than the complicated methods of a European strike, which the agitator was constantly recommending to them. A strike was unheard of among the Caucasian workers. They had not the remotest idea what it was like. And Lado Ketzkhoveli and Koba regarded it as all the more imperative to instigate a regular strike on European lines as soon as possible.

During the warm Georgian nights Stalin used to sit in the

little contraband printing works founded by his friend Lado in Avlabar. It was the most primitive concern, set up in the house of a washerwoman named Babeh, and Stalin would try to print off copies of the address Silvester Djibladze had drawn up by striking the type with a cobbler's hammer belonging to his father. But this primitive method of printing failed hopelessly, and the few copies of the address which were obtained were hardly legible. It was only when the compositors of a Tiflis printing works, who were friendly towards the Party, undertook the work, that Stalin and his associates were able to distribute a number of leaflets among the tramway men. But the success of this method of propaganda based on the Western system was not exactly staggering. For the tramway conductors, who belonged to different Caucasian races, had no very high opinion of print. And it was only after endless harangues and explanations had convinced them that in the event of victory their wages would be increased, and that there would be no necessity to drop their present methods of enriching themselves, that they began to consider the matter seriously.

At last after endless tergiversation, after the heroic exploitation of every conceivable form of Georgian eloquence, and after innumerable vain attempts at persuasion, the first strike of Caucasian workmen was called.

The Georgian Marxist organ *Kvali* waxed enthusiastic over the success of the experiment while the Tramway Company regarded the strike itself and above all the demand for a rise in wages as a monstrous innovation. Although the Tiflis authorities could have had no experience of fighting a strike, yet similar conditions apparently create similar measures all the world over. After much cursing and strenuous cogitation, which concluded with a conference of the authorities, they had recourse to the simple and time-honoured method of defence which consisted in filling the places of the criminally minded tramway workers with noble-minded strike-breakers. This was not very difficult. A few students anxious to do some practical work, and

a host of unemployed proletarians agreed to keep the trams running as usual.

To the leaders of this first strike, the news of the appearance of strike-breakers on the scene was eagerly welcomed. They now felt that they were really living in a properly organized capitalistic state, in which it was necessary to carry on the class war in all seriousness. In addition to a strike, then, there were now actually strike-breakers in Tiflis. This in itself might be regarded as a conclusive proof of the accuracy of the theoretical treatises on the Class War. The next stage in the struggle, as Stalin at once perceived, was an encounter between the strikers and the strike-breakers. To persuade the workers to use their fists was naturally far easier than to educate them in Western strike methods, and, armed with life-preservers, the workers proceeded to attack the enterprising students and other strike-breakers. Stalin, suddenly reminded of his old kinto days, fought in the front rank of the strikers, with the vigorous and muscular Lado close beside him. The uproar was terrific. The Viceroy and the Commissioner of Police, who had no hesitation in regarding this little diversion as a full-blown Labour insurrection, bravely decided to intervene. A company of Cossacks was therefore immediately ordered to the scene of the class battle, but they made no nice distinctions between the two sides engaged and lashed out indiscriminately with their heavy whips on the heads of the combatants of either category. The strikers withdrew, and it was probably on this occasion that Koba first made the acquaintance of the Cossack whip in his capacity as a revolutionary leader in the class war. Possibly in his fury he may even have been secretly proud of having for once come into such close contact with his enemies.

Thus the first Caucasian Workers' Strike was suppressed by these police measures, and without having scored a victory the workers were obliged to return to their labours. The majority of them were discharged. And the principle of Capitalism remained unshaken.

The part played in this strike by the Tiflis revolutionaries did not, of course, remain a secret to the police, and Lado Ketzkhoveli, the leader and organizer of the strike, was arrested and banished to Baku. He ultimately met a tragic fate. In Baku he founded a revolutionary nucleus of workers and set up a secret printing press. But he was eventually arrested by the police, and imprisoned in the ill-omened fortress of Mtekh, where, in the darkness of his cell, he was secretly put out of the way by the prison authorities. Such cases were common in those days.

On this occasion Stalin got off scot-free. His youth saved him from a too strict surveillance by the police, and he remained in Tiflis which was then regarded as the headquarters of the Caucasian working class movement. But even in the capital the revolutionaries were rather badly organized; the various groups were often quite unconnected, and frequently knew nothing about their own political partisans. The number of revolutionaries was small and their knowledge of revolutionary principles and methods negligible. It was only in 1900 that Djibladze, the Russian Kurnatovsky, and a few others founded the first Tiflis Committee of what was then still the united Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. Koba-Stalin became a member of this first organized revolutionary committee of the Caucasus. His guide, philosopher, and friend was the Russian Kurnatovsky, a friend of Lenin. It was he who first told Stalin about the sage who, in far distant parts, was directing the fate of the Revolution, and from time to time gave him copies of the famous paper *Iskra* (The Spark), which Lenin published in Munich and had smuggled into Russia.

The revolutionary party in Russia was not a united body at that time. Years before the final breach between the future Mensheviks and Bolsheviks, tendencies became apparent which led to the ultimate cleavage. In addition to the adherents of the official paper *Iskra*, produced by old revolutionary idols like Plekhanov, Axelrod, and Sazulich, but really controlled by

Lenin and Martov, there were various more or less influential groups who often dissented from the views of the *Iskra* group. Even in the Caucasus these tendencies met with a sympathetic hearing. From the earliest days of the Tiflis Committee, Stalin had opportunities of crossing swords with his colleagues in subtle disputations. But in Tiflis and in the profoundly revolutionary provincial districts nobody was concerned with the lofty theoretical abstractions over which the leaders abroad were quarrelling.

In Tiflis people were concerned with practical issues. The discussions centred round the best means of carrying on the propaganda of revolutionary ideas. The older members of the Committee wished to adhere to the original modest method of propaganda, according to which individual workmen, after having been watched for some time and found reliable, were selected for introduction into the ranks of the revolutionaries, while in the various small groups and circles those who were considered suitable were systematically initiated into the doctrines of revolution, with a view to being subsequently trained for more important work. It was by this time-honoured process that Stalin had been drawn into the ranks of the revolutionaries, and it seemed only natural, after the formation of the Central Committee, that the methods should remain unaltered.

But the youngest member of the Committee, Stalin, had no very high opinion of this system of the individual selection and training of workers. He was in favour of a great mass movement to take the place of the gradual laborious dinnings of revolutionary principles into the thick skulls of individual Caucasian workers, and he did not think it was in any way necessary for every revolutionary to drink the cup of Marxian doctrine to the dregs. The determination to be a revolutionary in deed, and not tractability or eagerness to learn, should be the criterion in the choice of revolutionary colleagues. This point of view, which seemed in the highest degree daring and dangerous to the older theorists of that day, Comrade Koba shared with all the younger

generation of revolutionaries in the Caucasus, whom the police had not yet succeeded in inspiring with sufficient respect for the authorities. And these eager young members of the Party were backed by Comrade Kurnatovsky, the friend of Lenin.

After many violent encounters with the old leaders, and many heated debates, Stalin's point of view at last prevailed. Henceforward the revolutionary struggle was to be transferred to the streets. Stalin, the pioneer of this change, was entrusted with the task of realizing it, and he threw himself heart and soul into the work. His plan was simple: in order to encourage the revolutionary spirit, to impress the masses and proclaim a fervent faith in the cause, it was necessary, now that the first strike had proved the possibility of revolution, to organize a mass demonstration.

In coming to this conclusion, Stalin had correctly gauged the peculiar conditions prevailing in the East. A hundred revolutionary workers studying a pamphlet by Lenin in the obscurity of their homes did nothing to serve the cause in the Orient. One box on the ears administered to a cavalry sergeant-major in full view of a whole street on a Sunday afternoon, when workers were out and about, was far more telling. It undermined the authority of those in power. And if ten workmen, who looked sufficiently pugnacious, would only collect at a street corner and roar "Down with the Tsar!" they would accomplish a revolutionary deed of decisive importance. News of such an act would be conveyed to the factories; one workman would tell another, and very shortly it would be known throughout the country districts and up in the mountains. And when at last, in some remote village of Daghestan, an enthusiastic Circassian told his fellow that in Tiflis a whole regiment of police had been thrashed and routed, to the accompaniment of cries of "Down with the Russians!" on the part of all the princes of Georgia, and that the Russian Viceroy had cried like a child for fear, the purpose of the revolutionary demonstration on the part of the ten workmen would be completely realized. For in that case,

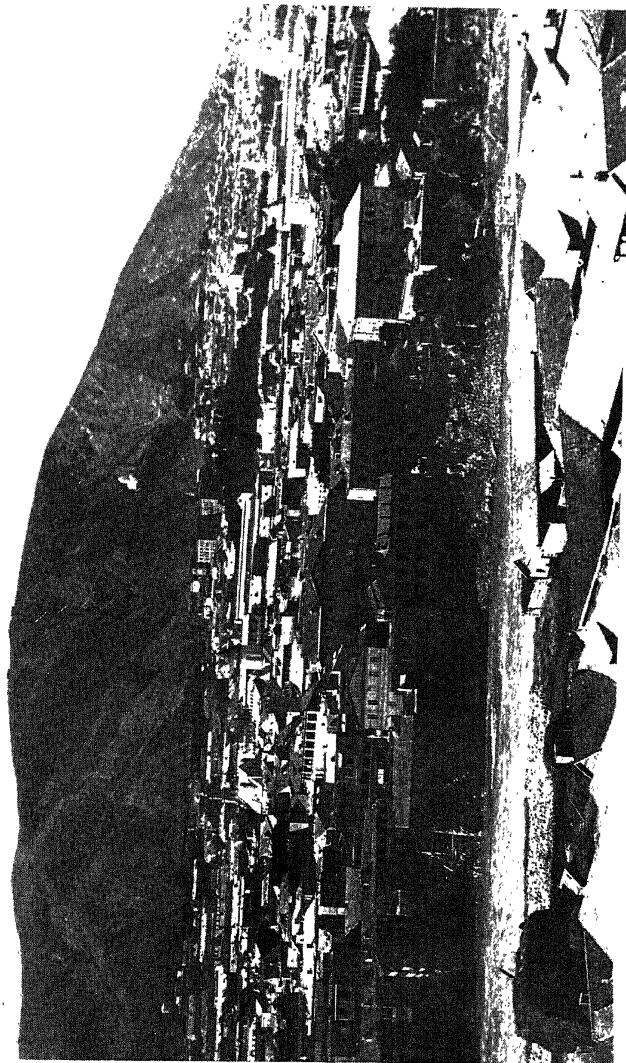
very likely the Chechens, convinced of the imminent emancipation of the mountain districts, would come down once more from their highland fastnesses and raid mail coaches and steal the cattle of the Cossacks. In which case it would be possible to report in *Iskra* in Munich that the revolutionary movement in the Caucasus was growing. In comparison with such results as these, the political education of one or two workmen more or less was of no importance whatever. To Stalin and his followers, revolutionary action was the first desideratum.

According to Stalin the first great deed should be a public demonstration of Tiflis workmen on the streets of the city—not such a very difficult manœuvre to carry out. For it does not require any very great gifts of persuasion to lure Orientals into the streets, particularly the streets of Tiflis.

In the spring of 1901 preparations began to be made for this first public demonstration in the Caucasus. In view of their experience of the first strike, the old Tiflis revolutionaries naturally kept in the background. They were afraid of fresh ventures which would only provoke fresh reprisals on the part of the police.

When at last the workmen swarmed expectantly into the open, collected into groups, and began to rampage through the streets, singing songs, joking and creating a disturbance, the only leaders to be seen among them were youths who had hitherto been spared by the police. On this occasion, however, the police left the workmen alone but not the young leaders. It was decided not to disperse the demonstrators; for, in that case, it would have been necessary to confess to superiors elsewhere that a demonstration of workmen had actually taken place in Tiflis which was so loyal to the Tsar. The police had nothing to gain by that!

So while the workmen were dispersing of their own accord, and Stalin, in his quarters, was giving his party colleagues a report of his first great revolutionary success, Colonel Martynov, the Commissioner of Police, was signing the order for the arrest



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A VIEW OF TIFLIS

of Joseph Djugashvili, the unemployed son of a craftsman, and former pupil of the Theological Seminary. But this first order for the arrest of Stalin, like a host of others that followed, could not be carried out. Despite the modest lines on which the Tiflis revolutionaries were organized, and their lack of experience in revolutionary practice, they possessed a sufficient number of connexions, friends and even secret patrons in high places, who although they watched their activities with disapproval meant well by them. And it was one of these friends who informed the revolutionaries of the impending arrest of Stalin. Now, whenever a comrade was threatened with arrest, even the most indolent revolutionary became alert. Stalin must be saved! Stalin must take flight! In a trice the modest means at the disposal of the revolutionary Committee were made available, and when the police appeared with the warrant for Stalin's arrest, he was no longer in Tiflis. A friendly worker on the railway took him to a friendly porter, who took him from a friendly engine-driver to a friendly guard. The Transcaucasian Railway then took him under its wing, and once again gave proof of the multifarious uses to which it could be put. On the following day Stalin alighted at the little oil-stained station of Batum, the Georgian port on the Black Sea, where he was accorded a hearty welcome by the workmen belonging to the numerous factories in the town.

Compared with Tiflis and Baku and the majority of Transcaucasian towns, Batum is a young and recently built place. After conquering the eastern shores of the Black Sea, the Russians built a new town on the site of the old Turkish fortress, and the broad streets, the fine European houses, the harbour and the gardens with their tropical vegetation and their narrow paths between beds of flowers, made Stalin feel almost as though he had been sent to Batum for a rest cure. But he had neither the time nor the inclination for a rest cure. He had gone to Batum not merely as a fugitive and outlaw, but as the delegate and representative of the Tiflis Committee of the Russian Social-

Democratic Labour Party. Batum was a city of working men, a commercial centre. From far distant Baku, with its oil wells, the liquid gold of the Caucasus flowed to Batum whence steamers conveyed it to Europe.

Along the seashore were situated the huge factories and refineries where the oil was prepared for the market, and it was among the workers in these refineries that Stalin now started his propaganda. Hitherto Batum had been virgin soil as far as revolutionary activities were concerned. It boasted of only one famous and venerable Marxist in the person of Nicholas Chkheidze, who wandered about in the shade of the palms, watching the police with mixed feelings, and hugging his scepticism to his breast in his peregrinations. The only part played by Batum in the revolutionary movement at this time was to act as intermediary for the dissemination of contraband literature. European steamers used to come there via Marseilles and Constantinople bearing crates and bales of European goods, among which there was frequently one containing the last numbers of *Iskra* and new pamphlets by Lenin. Naturally these cases were not allowed to pass through the hands of the customs officials. As the steamer approached shore, the mechanic Yenukidze (afterwards President of the Executive Committee) of Baku put out to sea in a tiny boat accompanied by two experienced smugglers. The Red literature would then be dropped over the side of the steamer, in waterproof packages, and Yenukidze would fish them out of the water and take them to Batum. The smugglers were given fifteen roubles for the job.*

The literature thus smuggled in, and his own powers of persuasion, enabled Stalin, who had benefited by his experience in Tiflis, to found in Batum a Committee of the Social-Democratic Labour Party similar to the one in Tiflis.

The worthy Chkheidze shook with fear. Committees were also formed in Baku and Chiatury, and the task of importing literature and working Ketzkhoveli's illicit press was no longer

* Before the War, the rouble was worth approximately fifty-two cents.

labour in vain. The majority of the members of the Committee founded by Stalin were men who worked in the oil refining works belonging to Rothschild and Mantashev, and in their eyes an outlaw was surrounded by a halo of glory. The result was that Stalin, the youngest member of the Tiflis Committee, soon became the leader of the organization in Batum.

He adhered to his original methods and still regarded strikes and demonstrations as the best means of fostering the revolutionary spirit of the working classes, and, as had been the case in Tiflis, he was convinced that a strike would be the best proof to the world that the Age of open class war had been inaugurated in the Caucasus. The workers in the Batum factories were more accessible to revolutionary ideas than the tramway men of Tiflis. Compared with the latter city, Batum was almost European. For years past foreign steamers had been pouring Western ideas into the town and introducing the spirit of rebellion and insurrection against the capitalistic order of society. Only a few months after his arrival in Batum, Stalin succeeded in calling the first oil workers' strike, which was followed by a demonstration regarded by the police as almost an insurrection. Prince Golitsyn, the brutal and detested Russian Viceroy of that day, drew his own conclusions from these demonstrations and the circulation of revolutionary literature in Tiflis and Batum, and began to feel seriously alarmed for the peace and order of his province. It seemed clear that an elaborate and extensive organization was at work which must be unearthed and rendered harmless once and for all. Hitherto the behaviour of the Caucasian police had been perfect, and they had been all that the hearts of the local revolutionaries could desire. For instance, when they arrested Balkvadze, the radical extremist, for his revolutionary activities, he was released the very next day, because his passport proved him to be of noble birth, and the police very properly argued that it was impossible for an aristocrat to have anything to do with revolution.

But now all this was to be changed, and all revolutionaries

were to be placed under lock and key! The Viceroy's orders were to be obeyed. Whereupon the police set diligently to work between Batum and Baku and every suspect was arrested and taken to the prisons of Tiflis and Kutais. One of the first to fall into their hands was Comrade Koba, the organizer of the Batum strike. It was no very difficult matter to discover a conspirator who was a recent arrival in the town, and on May 1, 1902, just as the workers were about to celebrate the new May Day festival in the shady gardens near Batum, and Stalin was leading a procession through the suburbs, making speeches and inciting the workers to fight, the police suddenly appeared on the scene. The May Day celebrations, which lent an almost international colour to a local event, had constituted the last straw and put an end to the reign of tolerance. Following hard on the heels of the strike and the demonstrations, they were intended to mark a significant stage in the development of the Caucasian Labour movement, which it was impossible for the police to ignore. A simple demonstration might in certain circumstances have been made to appear as a mere holiday spree on the part of the workers, but throughout the Tsar's domains this same harmless outing occurring on the first of May was regarded almost as a crime against the State. The detachment of police which put a stop to the May Day celebrations in Batum carried out the Viceroy's orders to the letter. The workers were brutally dispersed, and the gaunt man with the pockmarked face, the low forehead, and small eyes, whom they had been watching uneasily for some months, was arrested after a sharp and determined struggle and flung into the local jail.

Thus the warrant issued by the Tiflis police for the arrest of Stalin was executed in Batum, and a new chapter opened in the life of Koba-Djugashvili. For the young Russian revolutionary, his first term of imprisonment was what the taking of his degree is to the ordinary university student. It constituted a political diploma of efficiency issued by the police as the competent authority in such matters. It was only in prison that a revolution-

ary could recuperate from the strain of his unremitting labours as an agitator, from which he never rested night or day. Moreover, his association with other prisoners, who were also revolutionaries, strengthened his character; it added to his theoretical knowledge, and he left his prison cell fortified both in mind and body. True, every prison could not boast of the amenities of a sanatorium. Only a prison for political offenders could be regarded as a convalescent home, and the prison of Batum did not belong to this category; it housed criminals, thieves, and burglars. As Stalin had been arrested for a political crime, he could appeal to ancient Russian traditions and demand to be placed with his equals. And he exercised his right, though he did not succeed in being transferred to the citadel of Mtekh in Tiflis, which was the most important prison in Georgia for political offenders. But the prison of Kutais was also full of political offenders albeit they were guilty of minor crimes.

Kutais, the capital of Imeretia, was not an industrial town, and hence no hotbed of revolutionaries, though the ancient kingdom of Imeretia, for all its pious monasteries and churches, had long enjoyed the reputation of being rebellious. The best lawyers, orators, and literary men of Georgia came from Imeretia, and here, in the neighbourhood of Kutais, was the settlement of Chiatura, the third largest industrial area of the country, where rich deposits of manganese were worked. Like Tiflis, Batum, and Baku, Chiatura possessed a secret Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, which, together with the revolutionary workers and radical lawyers, supplied the occupants of the political section of the prison of Kutais.

Discipline in the political sections of Mtekh and Kutais was extremely severe in those days, the Viceroy's police doing all in their power to make the life of the prisoner as disagreeable as possible. Nevertheless, the prisoners not only found means of communicating with one another, but also succeeded in obtaining news of the outside world. As soon as he entered the prison at Batum, Stalin heard the latest political news. The

illicit printing works run by Ketzkhoveli and Yenukidze in Baku had been closed by the police, and the two revolutionaries had been conveyed to Mtekh. On the way, however, Yenukidze, although he was under arrest and still under the jurisdiction of the Baku police, had succeeded in procuring a copy of a pamphlet by Lenin that had just been smuggled into Russia, and confiscated by the authorities, and also Number 22 of *Iskra*, both of which he managed to take with him into the citadel of Mtekh. Lenin's pamphlet was soon in the hands of the political prisoners both at Mtekh and Kutais. It contained the first hint of the coming rift within the Social-Democratic Party. In the Caucasus the pamphlet was hailed with enthusiasm, and even the later Mensheviks agreed with its principles. For Stalin the matter was settled there and then. He sided with the radicals, and even at that time was probably inclined to think that the Social-Democratic Party, which was only four years old, would be split in two in the course of the ensuing year, though Lenin himself was not at the moment of that opinion.

Stalin's first period of imprisonment passed off uneventfully enough. He sat in his cell, read the books that were passed on to him by his neighbours, and waited patiently for whatever the police might have in store for him. With the best will in the world the latter could not arraign him before the Courts, for in the eyes of the law it was not a crime to organize May Day celebrations, and they were in no hurry to resort to more stringent measures against him. At least in prison the revolutionaries were fairly harmless, and could, moreover, if necessary, be rendered quite innocuous, as Ketzkhoveli had been, should any desire to that effect be expressed in high places.

While Stalin sat in his cell and waited, great events were in preparation among the Russian émigrés in Europe. The second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party was approaching, which was to shunt the wagon of the Russian Revolution on to another line, and the representatives and leaders of the Russian revolutionaries were hastening to Brussels

from every corner of Russia as well as from all the places of refuge abroad. In addition to seasoned champions of the Cause, like Plekhanov and Sazulich, new but already recognized leaders like Dan, Martov, and Lenin put in an appearance, supported by the younger generation then represented by Trotsky. The meeting of the Congress was, of course, quite illegal and the Brussels police were not a little surprised when one fine day they suddenly saw dozens of suspicious-looking foreigners, some of whom might well have been anarchists, thronging the streets of Brussels. The matter also reached the ears of the Russian Embassy, who with the help of the Brussels police had not much difficulty in making the suspicious-looking foreigners beat a hasty retreat from Belgian territory.

The Congress was transferred to London, and there the historic breach in the Party ultimately took place to the accompaniment of heated and stormy debates, the drawing-up of business-like reports, and passionate outbursts of eloquence. Lenin's logically revolutionary and relentless principles were rejected by most of the leaders, but accepted by the majority of the ordinary members of the Congress. Thus two factions were formed within the Party—the majority and the minority factions, or the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks. The difference between them regarding principle and organizing tactics, which was hardly noticeable at first, increased from day to day, and the efforts made on all sides to restore unity always came to grief on the rock of Lenin's stubborn refusal to give way. At that time many of the leading champions of the Cause forsook the Party despot, Lenin, among them being the latest recruit to the editorial staff of *Iskra*, Comrade Leon Trotsky. All Lenin's persuasive powers on this occasion in London could not induce Trotsky to vote with the Bolsheviks.

It was some time before the news of what was happening on the revolutionary front reached the little prison in the capital of Imeretia. While Lenin was fighting a hopeless fight with his old Party associates, the Caucasian police were deliberating what

they should do with Stalin, and came to the conclusion that “administrative” banishment to Siberia would be the surest and quickest way of knocking the revolutionary nonsense out of the young man’s head. With characteristic humanity they chose as his place of exile the village of Novaya Uda, in a god-forsaken East Siberian province.

On the way out to Siberia, Stalin received news of the great split in the Party that had taken place in London. He heard that the majority of the leaders had broken with Lenin and that the once united Party was now divided into two factions. He was quick to see that every member of the Party, including himself, must come to an independent decision regarding the complex problems of revolution. Hitherto, while he had been a member of the Tiflis Committee, he had always been in favour of deeds and active measures rather than theoretic assertions, and for this reason had never found it very easy to probe to the depths of Marxian doctrine. In any case, he was immediately convinced that Lenin’s party was the party of action while the latter’s opponents constituted the party committed to tactical caution, endless discussion, and doctrinal hair-splitting. Lenin’s principles rang out clear and lucid—social revolution, class war, unceasing plotting and planning, the ruthless abolition of half-measures and the refusal to have anything to do with the intellectuals, the bourgeoisie and the Liberals, to whom the Menshevik leaders were inclined to give an ever more favourable hearing.

Thus his whole disposition and predilection for the practical and the real led Stalin in one direction; Lenin’s way was his way! Later on, and even in those early days, he frequently gave the most absurd interpretation to Lenin’s fundamental principles and theories, that is to say, whenever he was called upon to decide for himself in such matters. Not that his theoretical views were different; it was merely that he was inept in theoretical matters and unskilful in the use of language. In spite of his exhaustive study of Marx, his training in the theological seminary, and his autodidactic studies, Stalin, compared with

Lenin, was a man without culture and education. But, in practice, he contrived to absorb the master's doctrines, and was even able to work on them and develop them creatively, better than any other of Lenin's followers.

From the day he told a group of political prisoners that he had accepted Lenin's principles in their entirety, all doubt regarding doctrine was once and for all banished from his mind. He left such matters to Lenin (truth to tell even Lenin rarely troubled his head about them) and devoted himself to the practical realization of the doctrine as a whole. This determination on the part of Stalin to take sides with Lenin, whom at that time he did not know personally, is all the more noteworthy, seeing that the Caucasus and Georgia were soon to become the headquarters of Menshevism. For the leading figures of the Georgian revolutionary movement, all of them middle-aged theorists, who might have been expected to exercise some influence over Stalin, went over to the bourgeois Mensheviks. Lenin, the leader living in exile far away in Europe, who in spite of bringing all his dialectical gifts to bear on Trotsky for nights at a time had been unable to win him over to his principles, meant more to Stalin than the best-known Caucasian leaders—his own fellow-countrymen and immediate superiors in the Party. At that time Lenin had probably never heard of Stalin even by name, for he was not in touch with the Caucasian revolutionaries, among whom he was one day suddenly to discover so loyal an adherent.

Stalin himself certainly never suspected that on his road to Siberia he would reach a decisive turning-point in his career which would influence not only his own fate but also that of many millions of his fellows, and the strange significance of which only posterity will be able to appreciate. The decision, which he reached instinctively, to follow the majority of the London Congress, and to accept the radical principles of Lenin, was in keeping with his soldierly love of discipline, his desire for action and his primitive pugnacity. Although the split had

been the result of a difference of opinion regarding organization and not fundamental principles, he felt that the Bolshevik road, as yet barely outlined, was bound to lead through strife and bloodshed, conspiracies, insurrection, and deeds of brutal determination to the goal in view, and Joseph Djugashvili, the son of the mountains, the uprooted scion of a race of craftsmen, the seminarist and trained terrorist, was bound to choose this road as the only right one, and was necessarily, therefore, a supporter of Lenin. He was a Bolshevik born.

Trotsky once said that a trained eye could distinguish Bolsheviks from Mensheviks by their appearance alone, by the expression on their faces and the look in their eyes. There is some truth in this. From the very beginning his physical make-up alone constituted Stalin the type incarnate of the Bolshevik, just as Martov, for instance, was essentially a Menshevik. The spiritual forces which at that time found play in Bolshevism were most strongly expressed in men of Stalin's type, who were forced into the arms of Lenin and yoked to the theory of perpetual class war, not by accident or, as in the case of Trotsky, for instance, as the result of mature reflection, but by pure instinct and the fatality of their own natures.

But the opportunity of putting into practice his newly acquired Bolshevik convictions was still denied to Lenin's Caucasian disciple. For the moment his path led him eastward across the endless wastes of Siberia to the village of Novaya Uda on the river of the same name. That long, miserable road, so often celebrated in song and described in legend, which the feet of many generations of Russian revolutionaries had trodden, now stretched out before Stalin. And the young revolutionary did not find the legendary path as cruel as it is habitually represented to be in the anniversary speeches and memoirs of many of his famous contemporaries. As it had been impossible to arraign him before the Courts, much less therefore to condemn him, Stalin travelled through the vast Empire of the Tsars in the company of two police officers, as a man banished for "ad-

ministrative" reasons. Where the railway came to an end, he was conveyed by cart or sleigh, frequently met people of his own kind at the various prisons along the route, learned many a useful lesson, became acquainted with the traditions of those who had been banished before him, and at last, enriched by much valuable experience, arrived in the village of Uda, which, with its handful of peasant huts, cut off from the outside world, was thenceforward to be his home.

The life of an "administrative" exile in Siberia, though strange and strenuous, was by no means wholly unbearable. Stalin, who had been accustomed to live in the meanest circumstances in Georgia, must have felt almost as though he were holiday-making in some fashionable watering-place. The State was legally responsible for his keep, and thus the revolutionary received from the public purse not only the wherewithal for his maintenance in hard cash but also all the socks, underclothing, and even boots that he needed. Furthermore, he was free to roam the district in the neighbourhood of the village of Novaya Uda. The exiles were not watched and could do as they liked. The Government was content to know that revolutionary propaganda in Novaya Uda could be carried on only among an extremely limited circle of thick-skulled Siberian peasants. But the revolutionary parties did not of course forget their banished members. From time to time parcels would arrive from the political Red Cross and from the Committee in Tiflis; at rare intervals there also appeared a police official from the nearest town who, as a matter of form, had to make sure that the exile, Djugashvili, was still in Uda.

In the early days of his banishment Stalin was an inexperienced youth, as yet ignorant of the simple means adopted by other exiles to effect their escape, and a whole year went by before he felt it his bounden duty to equip himself for flight. He met with no difficulty in escaping from Novaya Uda and travelled down the river as far as Irkutsk, where he remained for some time in hiding quite close to the Governor's residence.

Finally he crossed the Urals with perfect ease and via Astrakhan reached the fair city of Tiflis. The Siberian official charged with the matter calmly reported that the exile Djugashvili had escaped from Novaya Uda, his place of banishment. Such occurrences were common enough, and it was taken for granted that a Caucasian like Zozo Djugashvili would have the pluck to play such a trick on the authorities.

In January 1904, solemnly acclaimed by his friends, Stalin once more made his appearance in the revolutionary circles of Tiflis, and was immediately acknowledged as a man of ripe experience, a champion who had safely escaped from Siberia, the leader of the little body of Bolsheviks which had been formed meanwhile, and the disciple of Lenin.

His year's leave was over, and his life as an outlaw had started afresh.

THE CAUCASIAN REVOLUTIONARIES

THE VICEROY IN THE CAUCASUS AT THIS TIME WAS THAT OLD aristocrat, Count Illarion Vorontsov-Dashkov, one of the wealthiest and most distinguished of the Russian nobility. The Tsar's Viceroy had almost unlimited power in the Caucasus, and it was not without some show of justification that the opposition newspapers referred to him half in irony and half in spite as the Sultan of Tiflis.

In official circles the old Count was regarded as a Liberal, but his was merely the Liberalism of enlightened French eighteenth-century philosophy. Three Tsars, Alexander II, Alexander III, and Nicholas, had offered him the title of Prince, and three times he had refused it. He was too aristocratic to consent to receive a title at the hands of anybody. And even the dignity of Viceroy, the highest in the land and associated with royal honours and unlimited power, he accepted only as a personal favour to the Tsar, making it a condition that he should not touch a penny of the salary attached to the office, which in those days, exclusive of entertainment allowances, amounted to the trifling sum of 60,000 roubles a month. He gave as his reason for refusing it that, thanks be to God, he was still in a position to pay out of his own pocket for the borshch he offered his friends. He was indeed in a position to do so. For, as heir to the richest families in Russia, the Shuvalovs, the Dashkovs, and the princes Vorontsov, had he not a small fortune which he modestly computed at about 400,000,000 roubles?

This distinguished old gentleman, to whom the Tsar him-

self had nothing to offer, inhabited the huge Viceregal palace in Tiflis and was doing his best to rule the strange country round about him in true aristocratic style. On the whole, he regarded the unlimited power he wielded throughout the Caucasus in the light of an amusing game, a brief entertainment with which he deigned to while away his last remaining years of life. He would have been just as ready peacefully to play patience on the Riviera. Moreover, it transpired that, in his odd way, he was an excellent ruler and succeeded in making himself very popular in the Caucasus although apparently he took not the slightest pains to do so. He dealt with the various peoples under his jurisdiction as a chess player deals with the pieces on his board, coolly, indifferently, and with a certain condescension. Among the Caucasian intellectuals of that day, he was regarded as a sly fox and the shrewdest man in all Russia. But truth to tell, he was only a weary aristocrat, who foresaw the downfall of Russia, and, as he himself declared, did not wish to burden his last years by performing the duties of an executioner. In any case, he contrived without either violence or bloodshed to hold the Socialist parties of the Caucasus diplomatically in check. This extraordinary achievement on the part of a Russian aristocrat certainly brought him into evil odour with official circles in St. Petersburg. But what matter? To a Vorontsov-Dashkov the St. Petersburg officials were all upstarts and not worth a snap of his fingers.

At the time when Vorontsov was growing old and Stalin was on the point of reaching maturity, the Caucasus was already riddled with Socialism. This country, in which industrialism was really non-existent, the land of the Kabardians, the Chechens, the Khevsurians, the Chechens, and various other peoples, suddenly began to dally with European Marxism in its most up-to-date forms.

The Armenians were the first to set the bad example. They imported socialistic doctrines by devious routes via Turkey, where their kindred had long been radicals. The orthodox

bourgeois Nationalism of the Armenians, which might almost be regarded as having received official recognition, and of which Gregor Arzruni and the newspaper *Mshak* were the most advanced representatives, had no longer been sufficiently drastic under the rule of Prince Golitsyn, who brutally persecuted their race. Armenian Nationalism and Socialism were now embodied in the Dashnaktütün and Hnchak parties of which the latter was the less important.

These radical revolutionaries, whose slogan was the creation of a greater Armenia and the abolition of Capitalism, introduced terrorist methods of fighting into the Caucasus from Turkey, and a series of successful assassinations and marauding expeditions made the very name of the Dashnaktütüns stink in the nostrils of the authorities. Armenian merchants, as well as the large Mohammedan landowners and Russian Governors, trembled before them, and before the Hnchak party, which was even more radical and eventually joined the Bolsheviks. The famous political figure Andronnik soon became the leader of these Nationalist radicals. Among the more moderate elements the Dashnaks and Hnchaks were decried almost as bandits, not so much on account of their programmes as their methods of fighting. Vorontsov was the only man who was ever able to force obedience from the dangerous Dashnaks. But the means he used to achieve this end at first caused considerable consternation in St. Petersburg. When Nicholas II, for instance, expressed his intention of paying a visit to Tiflis, it was common talk throughout the Caucasus that the Dashnaks were planning an attack on his life, and the police demanded the application of Draconian methods against them. The arrest and banishment of all the Armenian leaders was to inaugurate a wholesale clearance of the district by the police as a measure of safety.

Vorontsov, however, was vigorously, and, as it turned out, quite justifiably opposed to any such policy. He had not the smallest faith in police measures. His methods were simpler, cheaper, and more reliable. Shortly before the arrival of the

Tsar, he summoned to his palace the leaders of the Armenian terrorists, who legally ought long since to have been executed, and asked them to give their word of honour that no attempt would be made on the life of the Tsar during his stay in the Caucasus. The terrorists, deeply moved, swore that no attempt would be made, and, in any case, to avoid temptation handed over their arms to the Viceroy for safe custody during the period of the Tsar's visit. Whereupon Vorontsov declared that he himself would be responsible for the safety of his sovereign, and the latter paid his visit without any attempt being made to assassinate him.

The second largest party in the Caucasus consisted of the Georgian Social-Democrats, who really formed part of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, and were almost unanimously in favour of Menshevism. Of all the Caucasian political parties, the Georgian Social-Democrats were the most steady and reliable, probably because their leaders were educated men in the European sense. As a matter of fact the practical Nationalism of the Georgians and their intellectual Socialism were no more in keeping with each other than they were with the exotic Caucasian landscape, and the popularity and outstanding importance of the Party were due above all to the personal qualities of its leaders. Chkheidze, Gegechkori, Yordania, Tsereteli, and other Social-Democratic leaders were the flower of the Caucasian intelligentsia.

Count Vorontsov-Dashkov certainly had but small sympathy for any Socialist party, yet he supported the Georgian Social-Democrats, though in such a manner that they themselves were not aware of the fact. When the Party split up into Bolsheviks and Mensheviks he transferred these sympathies, such as they were, to the latter, whom, compared with the Bolsheviks, he regarded as fellow-citizens he could tolerate. And when, after the Revolution of 1905, the Caucasus was in flames and bloody fights occurred between Armenians and Mohammedans in the streets of Tiflis, the Count, in strict secrecy, gave orders for the Geor-



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STALIN AS A YOUNG MAN
(COMRADE KOBA)

gian Socialists, subverters of the State though they were, to be supplied with arms. He knew that they would soon restore order, after which they too could in due course be disarmed. The Count treated all the Caucasian leaders with gentle irony, as though they were children playing at being grown up. In order to gratify their desire for public activity, he always played up the Caucasian and Armenian revolutionaries against each other over the most ridiculous trifles. Thus, at the very moment when Stalin came into touch with the radical elements, rivers of ink were being spilt in the Caucasus over the burning question as to where the Technical School was to be built in Tiflis—in the Armenian Avlabar or the Georgian Veri. In the heat of this dispute the Caucasians forgot all about the solidarity of international Socialism, and Viceroy Vorontsov laughed up his sleeve.

The third leading party in the Caucasus was the Mohammedan Mussavat, which had but little in common with the Christian revolutionaries and openly aimed at separation from Russia and union with Turkey. The leaders of the Mussavat were Akhmed-Bey Agayev, the well-known Pan-Turk, and Nasib-Bey Ussubbekov. Compared with the Mussavat, the Mohammedan Socialist Party, the Ittihad, was not of much importance. The Viceroy was a determined opponent of the Mussavat which was the most dangerous party, and well-informed people maintain to this day that he was more implicated than many supposed in keeping alive the feud between Armenians and Mohammedans. The Mussavat was not a Socialist party and did not have recourse to terrorist methods, but was more or less openly connected with Turkey, whence it imported its Pan-Islamic and Pan-Turkish ideas, and found among its otherwise hostile neighbours in the Russian Empire wholehearted support for its separatist aims.

Although the Armenian and Georgian revolutionaries were able to organize dangerous movements, they were at least merely local, whereas the Mussavat constituted a menace to the Russian Empire as a whole. The aim of the Pan-Turks was to free all the

Mohammedan districts from the rule of the Tsar, and to create a Mohammedan world-empire stretching from the Bosphorus to Siberia. In spite of this extremist programme, however, the Mussavat was not a radical political party as far as social reform was concerned. On the contrary, its leaders were great land-owners, industrial magnates, and bourgeois and Nationalist intellectuals.

The Mussavat, the Dashnaktütün, and the Georgian Social-Democrats were the leading parties of the three great Caucasian peoples—the Georgians, the Armenians, and the people of Azerbaijan. Compared with them the political groups of the other innumerable Caucasian peoples were of no real importance. The somewhat low level of culture prevailing among the latter, which the Russian administration had done but little to raise, made it difficult for political parties in the true sense of the word to be formed among them. Any member of these peoples who felt called upon to play a part in social life or to combat the existing social conditions generally became an out-and-out brigand. If he had lived in Tiflis and come in contact with Georgians, he called himself a Socialist; but this, of course, did not change his nature. On the other hand there were also members of the aristocracy who for some unaccountable reason were openly in sympathy with Socialism. Thus it was the Georgian princes, for instance, who, after all, had very little reason to be dissatisfied with the existing state of affairs, who formed the famous society known as the "Lilac Cross," for "combating bloody Tsarism and actively supporting the Socialists," its special object being the liberation of Socialists who had been sent to prison. As feudal aristocrats, the Georgian princes were opposed to Tsarism, but the aims of the Socialists were quite as alien to them as they themselves were to the mountain brigands. Socialism, however, became a sort of fashion, which even the most hidebound of feudal nobles found it impossible to resist.

At the time when Stalin was first beginning to take a tentative interest in politics, there existed in the Caucasus, in addi-

tion to the rule of the Viceroy, a clearly defined three-party system—in Georgia the Social-Democrats and subsequently the Mensheviks, in Armenia the Dashnaktütün, and in Azerbaijan the Mussavat. There was no room for the newly-formed international party of the Bolsheviks in this system. For in the Caucasus an industrial proletariat, which might have supported Bolshevism, was virtually non-existent. Industrial workers were to be found only in a few centres like Baku, Batum, and Chiatura; but as they were split up according to nationality, there was little hope of their adopting communistic ideas.

Nevertheless, an extremely influential though not a very strong communistic group was ultimately formed in the Caucasus, which drew its inspiration not so much from Marx as from Shamil, the Caucasian champion of the cause of freedom. Outcasts, without either foothold or stake in the country, and animated only by an overwhelming desire to overthrow the established system, filled the ranks of these Caucasian Communists, whom it was sometimes difficult to distinguish from ordinary Caucasian brigands. And indeed they themselves were not anxious to differentiate themselves sharply from the latter. Any rude highlander, who was a professional brigand, and one day felt the need of placing himself under the protection of some organization, was just as welcome to them as a seminarist who substituted Marxian scholasticism for that of the Church Catechism. For men with no past and no future Caucasian Bolshevism was the obvious refuge, and the history and convictions of newcomers were not investigated too narrowly. Well-developed muscles, hatred of the police, and a readiness to execute orders without question sufficed. It was only the leaders of the Party who, with one eye on their European colleagues, from time to time held fantastic theoretical debates, which dumbfounded and confused their opponents, the Social-Democrats.

They were strange debates. A number of gigantic, armed men, of gloomy and sinister appearance, would meet together in some picturesque Georgian tavern. They would drink wine,

eat vast quantities of mutton, and cast sidelong glances at the table close by where cultivated Mensheviks were quietly discussing Kautsky's latest book. Suddenly one of these forbidding giants would jump to his feet and go up to the Mensheviks' table. "And what do you think, Comrades, of the arrangement of parties in the Austrian Parliament?" he would ask scornfully. Neither table knew anything whatever about the arrangement of parties in the Austrian Parliament, and the Mensheviks would be reduced to anxious silence. "Ah," roared the Bolshevik, thumping his fist heavily on the table, "you traitors to the working classes! You hirelings of Francis Joseph!" And he would seize one of the Mensheviks by the collar and a general scuffle would follow.

Such scenes as this the Bolsheviks called "private debates" and "enlightening the misguided opponents." The leaders of the Party wrote exhaustive reports about them to Lenin, and in the end the Mensheviks avoided these extremists like the plague. The fact that, in spite of such behaviour, the Bolsheviks did not entirely sink to the level of brigands, but still passed for a political group, was due not so much to the tolerance of the Mensheviks who recognized their political status, as to the extraordinary good-fellowship characteristic of all Caucasian communities, and also to the iron discipline they were compelled to observe. Even at the height of their influence, they never played a leading part in the Caucasus, but were regarded as the most resolute, best organized from the military point of view, and least cultivated of the highland revolutionary groups. For simple and predatory natures, capable of throwing bombs without flinching and of committing murder and escaping into the mountains to jeer at the outside world, there was no alternative but to join the pugnacious body of Caucasian Bolsheviks.

The qualifications demanded by the other parties, although not impossible of attainment, nevertheless presented considerable difficulty to the Bolshevik recruits. But the smattering of revolutionary knowledge and experience required by the rest

could be more than counterbalanced by untiring energy and ceaseless activity among the Bolsheviks.

And like man like master! Among the Communists there was hardly a single leader who was thoroughly versed in Marxian revolutionary doctrine. If a man was able to recite a few sentences from Marx by heart, he was regarded as a master theorist by the Caucasian Bolsheviks, and those with very little more knowledge were immediately hailed as leaders. Nevertheless, their number was limited, and even when Bolshevism was triumphant, it would have been difficult to point even to three or four men who could seriously be regarded as Marxists. It was no very difficult matter, therefore, to become a Bolshevik leader in the Caucasus provided a man's pugnacious instincts were sufficiently developed.

Relations between the police and the Communists in the Caucasus were never very cordial. While the Armenophile Vorontsov tolerated the Dashnaktütün, was ironically sympathetic towards the Mensheviks, and did all in his power to encourage the Mussavat to migrate to Turkey, he employed very different methods towards the Bolsheviks. When they were caught, imprisonment and Siberia was the only fate that awaited them. In his eyes they were bandits who, with their blasphemous talk about internationalism, did not even swallow the bait he offered them in the shape of the local dispute about the Technical School, and in the event of street fighting were not in the least concerned about restoring peace and order. Whereas the other Caucasian parties were always able to carry on their work openly, the Bolsheviks were constrained to secrecy and conspiracy. The qualities chiefly considered in the choice of leaders were therefore those of good conspirators; for only experienced conspirators could be expected to hold their own to some extent against constant persecution. And for this reason these people displayed all the more brutality whenever they were in a position to level a blow at their enemies. The history of this body of conspirators is really the life history of Stalin.

THE CAUCASUS IN FLAMES

THE FIRST RUSSIAN REVOLUTION, WHICH BROKE OUT IN 1905 AS the result of the Russo-Japanese War, met with widespread sympathy in far-away Caucasus. Working men, semi-intellectuals, officials, and even some of the nobility were apparently one and all stirred to the depths by this revolutionary movement which had appeared like a bolt from the blue. The abdication of the Tsar was expected at any moment, and, full of fantastic hopes of freedom, the people joined enthusiastically in the revolutionary struggle.

Old Vorontsov-Dashkov, shrewd old fox though he was, was utterly taken aback by the vehement desire for freedom manifested by the various peoples under his rule. The Ingushes, the Kabardians, the Svanetians, and numberless other races suddenly demanded the vote and other substantial privileges, the very names of which had been unknown to them a few years previously.

St. Petersburg ordered war to the knife against the presumptuous claims of the highlanders, and the old Count was only too ready to fall in with the wishes of the authorities. One of the leading elements in the struggle against the Viceroy was the secret Bolshevik newspaper *The Proletarian Struggle*, edited, published, and circulated by Stalin. Only a few years had elapsed since he had first been admitted to the ranks of the revolutionaries and but two years since the split had occurred in the Socialist Party, when, ignorant of the momentous conse-

quences of his act, he had proclaimed himself a follower of Lenin, on purely emotional grounds.

Among the Caucasian Bolsheviks he soon rose to the position of leader. In addition to *The Proletarian Struggle*, he also edited the Georgian communistic paper, *Dro*, and directed the propaganda and the demonstrations of the communistic groups in the Caucasus. Up to that moment no serious conflicts had taken place with the police. Stalin's first endeavour was to gather up the strength of the Party, and it was only in the summer of 1905, in association with non-communistic leaders, that he ordered the Caucasian revolutionaries to join the conflict.

On a bright summer morning the Caucasian conspirators gathered together before an extremely old Georgian church in Didube, a suburb of Tiflis, and in the suburb Nakhlovka. The assault on the city was to take place from the church. In obedience to secret orders issued by their leaders the proletariat and lower middle classes of the Georgian capital flocked from their factories and workshops and their dirty streets and gathered in front of the church of Didube. Stalin headed this band of sturdy warriors and with the indispensable red flag in the van the demonstration began.

The procession swarmed through the Mushtaid, the public park of Tiflis, and poured into the town, where in the suburb of Nakhlovka the fighting was to take place. Stalin's object was to capture the citadel of Mtekh, set the inmates of the prison free, and start open rebellion at that point.

The demonstrators advanced as far as Golovinsky Prospekt, the main street of Tiflis, quite peaceably. Here, opposite the Viceregal Palace, which was surrounded by Cossacks, Stalin called a halt, and from the steps of the picturesque theatre turned to the people of Tiflis and for the first time addressed them as a demagogue in a somewhat absurd speech. He referred to the sufferings of the prisoners, to the rise in the price of

matches, to the wages of the workers and the failure of the wine harvest, all jumbled together half in Georgian, half in Russian. Nevertheless, his speech made a deep impression on the people of Tiflis. Few could make head or tail of it, but all could see the resolute Georgian features and energetic gestures of the man standing on the marble steps of the theatre. They were one and all inspired with an unflinching determination to perform heroic deeds.

It was not Stalin's fault if the bravery of this first Tiflis demonstration did not lead to the liberation of the prisoners of Mtekh. At the gates of the Tiflis Gymnasium the demonstrators were confronted by a regiment of Cossacks and found their road barred. They stopped short and the Cossacks glowered menacingly at them from a distance of only a few yards. Midway between the mob and the representatives of power there stood, as in the great days of the French Revolution, a tall lamp post. Stalin was in the front rank of the insurgents. Suddenly he separated himself from his comrades, went up to the lamp post, and nimbly climbed the smooth iron column. Once more he had raised himself to a point of vantage from which he could be seen far and wide by the people of Tiflis, and his rugged Georgian accents again fell on the ears of the crowd.

The Cossacks looked on with apparent indifference. No one ever knew who fired the first shot that day, a Cossack or one of the demonstrators. In any case a shot rang out from somewhere. Whereupon the wiry man on the lamp post was seen to grab quickly at his belt and to produce one dynamite bomb after another which he flung with great force into the ranks of the Cossacks. The latter levelled their rifles on the crowd and the great Tiflis massacre began. The battle lasted for three hours in the heart of the city, in the Golovinsky Prospekt, the Soldiers' Market, Erivan Square, and the famous working class quarter of Nakhalovka. Stalin's lamp post was torn up from the asphalt pavement and flung to the ground, and he carried on the fight with dagger, revolver, and bombs in the front rank of the in-

surgents. Again and again that day he left the scene of the battle to summon reinforcements from Didube and for some hours it seemed as though the bloody days of the Persian invasion had returned to the drunken Georgian capital. Blood flowed in streams along the streets of Tiflis and at last, after receiving reinforcements, the Cossacks formed up for a determined attack and stormed the revolutionaries.

Panic ensued and the crowd dispersed. Many of the insurgents flung away their weapons and tried to save their lives. The majority of them, who came from the lower middle class and the proletariat, had never before held a weapon in their hands, and were unable to withstand the violent onslaught of the Cossacks. The fashionable Golovinsky Prospekt, the steps of the theatre, and the side streets were strewn with dead and wounded. The Tsar had conquered!

Accompanied by a body of faithful supporters, Stalin fled down Loris Melikov Street to the luxurious Hotel Europa. The sudden appearance of this band of wild, armed men created a panic among the aristocratic visitors of the hotel very similar to the panic raging in the streets, and for the next few hours the hotel was the citadel of the revolutionaries. The doors were barricaded and the windows broken, and from all the rooms the insurgents fired on the Cossacks. In a trice the hotel had been converted into a strong fortress. Not all the insurgents were Bolsheviks. Many of them did not even know the name of their leader. But even in those early days Stalin did not inquire into the past of those who flocked to join him. Suffice it that they were anxious to fight! The Cossacks besieged the Europa until nightfall, and it was only when orders were given to storm the building regardless of its aristocratic inmates that Stalin was forced to withdraw. The Cossacks pressed forward under the fierce rapid firing of the insurgents and captured the hotel, while Stalin and his followers escaped to the street through the cellars.

The city was on fire; the timber yards on the old market place and the little houses along the banks of the Kur were in

flames. Stalin, accompanied by a few Armenians and Georgians who, prompted by some vague sense of party solidarity, had remained true to him, was obliged to flee through the city. In Nakhalovka they were forced to fight again, but succeeded in reaching the suburb of Didube from which they had started out in the morning. Here they gained a few hours' respite. But eventually the Cossacks appeared there also, and Stalin was obliged to go into hiding.

On the following day, when "law and order" had been restored in Tiflis, when the Cossack patrols were in undisputed possession of the streets, and the authorities were able to send their self-laudatory telegram to the central Government, the man who had flung the bombs from the lamp post was nowhere to be found. By way of Dushet, the Georgian highland town, he had fled to the mountains, which from time immemorial had been the traditional refuge of the political fugitive. Nobody ever found out where and with whom he hid himself during this period. Perhaps it was among the Khevsurians, the wild and chivalrous tribe who for centuries had afforded asylum to all political fugitives of whatever denomination and hidden them from the eyes of the police of every country. Or it may have been the Tushens or the Pshavians or some other of the innumerable mountain tribes who gave him sanctuary. In any case when twenty years later Prince Kakutso Cholokashvili, the last of the Georgian White Guard, also fled to the Khevsurian hills, Stalin chivalrously contrived to show his gratitude to his former hosts and allowed them to remain true to their traditions. He did not prevent them from giving shelter to the Prince, with the result that the latter was able to end his days abroad.

In spite of having to take flight after this bloody victory of the Cossacks, Stalin was able to keep secretly in touch with the communistic centres both in Russia and abroad. In that same year, 1905, a congress of Russian revolutionaries was held at Hammerford in Finland, and Stalin, leaving the shelter of the

friendly mountain tribes, travelled under an assumed name through St. Petersburg to Finland where, as the representative of the Caucasian Bolsheviks, with his pipe in his mouth, sombre and silent, he listened to the theoretic disputation of the delegates and then returned home.

Under the rule of the crafty Count and Gryasnov, the brutal Governor General of Tiflis, great changes were taking place in the district. A hint from St. Petersburg had led the Caucasian administration to adopt new methods in their fight against the Caucasian emancipation movement. Certain bureaucrats at headquarters had apparently discovered that a love of blood-shed was an ineradicable characteristic of the Caucasians, a view both shallow and unfounded, but on the basis of which they endeavoured to account for the surprising revolutionary activities and disloyalty of the Tsar's Caucasian subjects. This predatory lust of blood, they argued, must be sufficient proof in the eyes of the world that the Caucasus was fit only for despotic rule, albeit one animated by the loftiest moral motives. And the Caucasians themselves were to offer conclusive proof of this. The process of reasoning on the part of the Russian authorities was extremely simple. If at the slightest sign of weakness on the part of the Government the Caucasians could think of nothing better to do than to fly at each other's throats and murder right and left, obviously Russian rule was an inestimable boon to the country! A hint, a significant smile was all that was needed, and the subordinates felt compelled to take the necessary steps.

Conditions at the moment were favourable to these plans. The Caucasian peoples having found an outlet for their passions refused to revert to the Oriental indifference of yore; besides, their Asiatic neighbour, Turkey, had already set them a good example. There, under the rule of Abdul Hamid, massacres of Armenians were taking place which, as was evident to all, led to the formation of the Armenian revolutionary parties. The Mohammedans and the Armenians, the two peoples concerned in the massacres, were plentifully represented in the Caucasus. So

what was more obvious than that they should fly at each other's throats in that country also? It has never been documentarily proved that the Russian Government actually provoked the Armenian-Mohammedan massacres which culminated in the Caucasian revolution of 1905, but documentary evidence in such cases is almost always impossible to secure. However, it is the general opinion of those in a position to know and also of the people concerned that the Russians not only silently tolerated the massacres, but that the Russian police distributed arms first to the Armenians and then to the Mohammedans in order to provoke them against one another, and subsequently took away the weapons from one party and placed them at the disposal of the other.

The flood of the Armenian-Mohammedan massacres which poured over the Caucasus reached even Tiflis, where for centuries Mohammedans and Armenians had lived peaceably side by side; but in the end both peoples made common cause and joined the revolutionary movement.

But for the moment they were expected to give proof of their political immaturity by indulging in mutual slaughter. When Stalin returned from Finland, preparations for these massacres were already in full swing. The original attempt to incite Georgians against Mohammedans failed, owing to the horror of the former for anything in the nature of street massacres. The initiative was therefore left to the Mohammedans, though weapons were distributed to the Georgians, ostensibly for the purpose of restoring order but possibly in the silent hope that their efforts in that direction might lead to a breach with the Mohammedans.

Such was what was known as "Russian policy in the Caucasus."

The Communists, who were theoretically opposed to inciting people against one another (their ultimate behaviour showed that they did not interpret this part of their doctrines too literally), were obviously too few in number to offer any

practical resistance to the policy of setting one race against the other. So they did not trouble their heads over-much about it, for in Stalin's opinion it was quite possible that even Armenian-Mohammedan massacres might result in provoking the spirit of revolution, with which, after all, the Communists were chiefly concerned.

As was to be expected, the Armenian-Mohammedan massacre in Tiflis was carried out according to programme. The Mohammedans opened the fight. Equipped with arms, they assembled at the street corners and forced their way into the Armenian houses where they were received with showers of boiling water or tar. Compared with similar massacres in Baku and Gandia, which took place at that time, the carnage in Tiflis was trifling. Only a few hundred people fell victims to the policy of the Russian Government. The words "carnage" and "massacre" in this connexion are none too apt, and the Russians coined the wonderfully appropriate word *resnya* for the purpose, which, as opposed to *pogrom*, means literally "butchery" and comes from the word "to slaughter," in the peaceful sense of the butcher's trade.

Stalin contrived to turn these butcherings to account in a most original way. In the Mohammedan quarter of Tiflis there were also many rich Armenian families to be found, just as Mohammedan families frequently inhabited the Armenian quarters of the town. Now these families who were in the centre of the enemy's camp were naturally the first to be exposed to the danger of extermination, and Stalin, the leader of a band of native Bolsheviks disciplined on military lines, was naturally in a position to protect them. Thus in the middle of the street fighting, when the massacre first began, he appeared at the house of some rich Armenian merchant who lived in the Mohammedan quarter, stood watching the consternation of the inmates for some time, and at last presented himself to the head of the house and gravely informed him that the hour could not be far distant when the honest merchant together with all his family

must inevitably fall beneath the knives of the Mohammedans. The merchant, who did not require this piece of information from Stalin to make him feel extremely anxious, was now driven to despair. But with kind-hearted impartiality Stalin declared himself ready to help the unfortunate family at his own personal risk as a friend. He and his Bolsheviks could easily help the Armenians to escape from their dangerous plight and find them safe hiding places outside the Mohammedan quarter of the town until the massacre was over. Naturally, however, he expected the merchant to give his rescuers something in return for their trouble, a donation of—say, one thousand roubles to the Bolshevik funds would be sufficient. Failing this, he would be obliged, much to his regret, to leave the family to their fate. With houses in flames all round and wild fighting in the streets, even the most tight-fisted merchant had but little time to haggle. Quickly he would thrust two five-hundred-rouble notes into his rescuer's hand. Whereupon a cart surrounded by villainously-looking, armed Communists immediately appeared and, regardless of the firing of the Mohammedan insurgents, conveyed the worthy merchant and his family to a quiet village on the outskirts of the town.

Meanwhile, Stalin would calmly repair to the next Armenian merchant or else dash through a hail of enemy bullets to the Armenian quarter of the city, where the farce would be repeated, this time with a Mohammedan as the terrified hero.

Thus during the four days of the Armenian-Mohammedan massacres Stalin contrived to save dozens of merchant families. And when, at last, the Russian police, with the support of the Georgian Mensheviks, succeeded in restoring order, the Bolsheviks were, for the time being, the richest revolutionary party in the Caucasus. As a matter of fact the Communist rescue cart was most efficient. Not one of the merchants who had contributed liberally to the Bolshevik coffers was molested in any way. And, as Stalin helped both Mohammedans and Armenians, he contrived to keep on the right side of both peoples.

After the massacres had brought to an end the series of open insurrections, the police were given a free hand. All kinds of cold-blooded brutalities were excused on the ground that, after all, the Caucasians were savages who could not be ruled in any other way. Even the Viceroy, who was opposed to brutal measures, was unable to put a stop to outrages on the part of the police, and a reign of open terror began. The citadel of Mtekh, which for a while had released its prisoners, was once again filled with revolutionaries of every category. One after the other the best Caucasian fighters were sent into exile. Man after man went into banishment; the most brutal police regulations were issued and carried out; and the forces of reaction began to revive.

The man responsible for all these police measures was Gryasnov, the notorious Governor General, an old and hardened reactionary who regarded it as his life's mission to combat revolution in every shape and form. Whether in suppressing Labour risings, shooting revolutionary leaders, or flogging demonstrators, he was ever in the front ranks of the police. It was he who issued the most brutal orders and saw that they were carried out, with the result that throughout the Caucasus at that time his name was the symbol of all that was hostile to the cause of freedom.

To the little body of Caucasian Bolsheviks who had survived the revolutionary struggle, the Governor had long been a thorn in the side. It was through him that all their efforts at reviving the flagging spirit of revolution were frustrated, and the young men of the Party (and it really consisted only of young men) regarded this faithful servant of the Tsar as the real obstacle in the way of successful revolution in the Caucasus. As there was little hope of his being recalled, the "Caucasian Committee" decided to have recourse to terrorist measures and to murder him. In addition to clearing the country of the "muck-heap" (Gryasnov comes from the Russian word *gryaz*, meaning filth), they hoped, as usual, that the deed would lead to a revival of the

revolutionary spirit among the masses, which in the circumstances was of no little importance.

The most prominent Caucasian conspirators, of whom Stalin was one, therefore met in a tiny little tavern in the suburbs—the headquarters of the revolutionaries—where plans for the murder were carefully worked out to the smallest detail. The bombs which were to blow the Governor to pieces were duly prepared, and all that remained to be settled was the crucial question as to who should perform the deed. It was taken for granted that the assassination which had to be carried out in broad daylight would lead to the arrest and execution of the assassin. The little band assembled in the suburban tavern was made up of courageous men; nevertheless, they looked uncomfortably at each other, and even the intrepid Stalin, their recognized leader, sat silently smoking his pipe in a corner. Eventually they decided to draw lots to settle the matter, and pieces of paper were thrown into a large felt hat. One after another put his hand into it, and each, as he drew a blank, heaved a barely audible sigh of relief. At last the fatal scrap was drawn by a young Georgian revolutionary, no novice in the ranks, named Djordjashvili. The rest solemnly and earnestly congratulated him. Suddenly Stalin jumped to his feet and begged for a hearing. "The murder of Gryasnov," he said, "is far too important a matter to be left to one man. If his hand shakes a little or he flings his bombs too hastily the attempt may fail." And he proposed that he should be made an associate in the deed. The others agreed to this unexpected suggestion, and without waiting for the meeting to break up, Stalin took his leave.

A few days later two jolly Georgian workmen with pails in their hands might have been seen walking down Bariatinskaya Street. Only the initiated could have recognized in these apparently harmless individuals, Djordjashvili and Stalin. The former was whistling a Georgian ditty and Stalin was smiling at the passers-by. When they reached Alexander Park in front of the Governor's Palace they stopped, and Stalin began rummaging in

his pail as though he were looking for his tools under the papers. Slowly the iron door of the Governor's Palace opened. Gryasnov was going out for his daily constitutional. The two workmen were still bending unconcernedly over their pails, apparently taking no notice of Gryasnov. Suddenly there was a loud report and four round objects, which had been taken out of the pails, burst at the General's feet. The broad thoroughfare of Baratinskaya Street was filled with smoke. When the air had cleared, the torn and lacerated body of the Governor could be seen lying on the pavement. Cossacks hurried up from all directions. No one knew where the bombs had come from. All that could be seen was a young workman jumping over the wall of Alexander Park. The Cossacks dashed into the Park after him, followed by police and mounted gendarmes. The other workman, Stalin, was more cool and collected and remained quietly in the street among the Cossacks staring down with well-feigned horror at the body of the Governor.

Nobody took any notice of him. Close by, the excited police were jumping over the Park walls; one of them pushed Stalin out of the way, shouting, "What are you loafing about here for?" Stalin thereupon walked calmly and quietly away without being molested by anyone. But Djordjashvili, who had foolishly been in such a hurry to get over the wall, was arrested. His pursuers captured him on the lawns of Alexander Park. The struggle lasted only a few minutes, and, bound hand and foot, he was taken to the citadel of Mtekh.

The murder caused a great sensation. Only a year previously the Dashnaktütün Party had made a similar but unsuccessful attempt on the life of Prince Golitsyn. On that occasion official telegrams of congratulation had poured in from every corner of Russia, and now the Viceroy's table was covered with messages of condolence. Half an hour after the assassination the Palace was full to overflowing with visitors who had come to express their sympathy. The first to appear was Prince Eristov, the Marshal of the Georgian nobility. He expressed his horror

at the fact that such things could take place in the Georgian capital which was so loyal to the Tsar. There was a unanimous demand for the execution of the assassin. Djordjashvili was sentenced to death by court martial. Gallows were set up in the great square of Tiflis during the night and on them the hero ended his short life.

The Press, the authorities, and what in those days people were pleased to call public opinion expressed complete satisfaction over this conclusion to the incident. At the gates of Alexander Park, where Gryasnov had been blown to bits, a grateful people erected a monument to his memory.

Meanwhile, in a suburban quarter of Tiflis, Stalin sat smoking his pipe, thinking of his dead friend, and humming a little Georgian ditty which Djordjashvili had composed before his death:

*Dedav nustiri
Mamav nustshivi
Me movashore
Kalaksa chiri
Me mikhvarda
Vashlis triali
Talakhadzas
Makhla priali.*

Translated into English this terrorist ditty reads:

Mother, father, cease your crying,
I always liked dung-apples flying
When we aimed them in the street—
A more heroic kind of feat
Than making our old city free
Of that great muck-heap, you'll agree!

Stalin did not often sing songs, but this ditty was constantly on his lips. And the Georgian bards, the Mestviri and the Ashiki, took it up and sang it in the streets of Tiflis. It was carried

through the hills and dales of Georgia. Blind wandering minstrels sang it to the villagers, and at their meetings the terrorists would repeat it again and again under their breath. It became the hymn of the Caucasian revolutionaries.

Soon brave Djordjashvili's little song was sung under the Viceroy's windows, and Georgian guttersnipes shouted it in the streets.

*Dedav nustiri
Mamaav nustshivi. . . .*

But this was not in keeping with the official condemnation of the murderer, and the song of the terrorist Djordjashvili was prohibited. Only the little band of Caucasian conspirators were able to hum it to themselves at their secret nocturnal gatherings, and many years elapsed before it was again allowed to be heard publicly on the streets of Tiflis. Then, after Stalin had entered that city in triumph, the monument to the "muck-heap" was thrown down and a statue to Djordjashvili erected in its place.*

Gryasnov's murder was the last great deed in the blood-stained annals of 1905, and in spite of every effort the tide of revolution began to ebb in the Caucasus. The energetic measures adopted by the police drove timid spirits out of the ranks of the revolutionaries. Moreover, the elections for the first Duma were held and most of the parties engaged enthusiastically in the contest. The Bolsheviks alone refused to have anything to do with this first suffrage campaign in Russia.

Lenin regarded the Duma and everything connected with it as a further example of capitalistic trickery. Stalin would not have been a loyal member of the Party had he not been in entire

*It is impossible to produce documentary proof of Stalin's part in carrying out the assassination of Gryasnov. But it is generally supposed that he had a hand in the affair. In political circles the most that is admitted is that he took a leading part in the preparations. One of my authorities, a common workman of Tiflis, who was an eyewitness of the incident, declared that he saw Stalin, who was then called Koba, standing by Djordjashvili at the time.

agreement with this point of view, and the little body of Communists embarked upon a bitter fight against the elections and the various political parties in the highlands. But from the very beginning it was a hopeless struggle.

To most of the politicians the prospect of taking an active share in the government of the Russian Empire as a member of the Duma was too alluring to be resisted. Moreover, after the final victory of the Caucasian three-party system, there was no room in the country for the Bolsheviks.

One after the other the Bolshevik leaders left the Caucasus. The intimidated bourgeoisie suddenly refused to give them any support, while the other revolutionary parties called them mad and held aloof from them. A gloomy, uneventful period now ensued during which the country recovered from the confusion of the revolution. The intellectual stragglers were suddenly filled with a holy terror of the police, and all parties felt the need of revising their fundamental principles and philosophy in order to be in a position to draw theoretical conclusions from their practical defeat. It was only among the Bolsheviks that no sympathy was felt for these doubts and cogitations. Now, as ever, Lenin remained the supreme leader, whose doctrine, in the eyes of his followers, was unassailable. Even the severe defeat of the working class movement organized by the Bolsheviks, the suppression of their newspapers, and the apparently declining influence of the Party could do nothing to shake Stalin's fanatical faith in Lenin.

In any case, it had now become imperative to think out a new plan of campaign. The Stockholm Conference, to attend which Stalin was smuggled over the frontier with the help of Krassin, passed revolutionary measures of the most extreme nature, but they could not be put into practice, and even in the Caucasus, Stalin's domain, work had to come to a standstill.

The two main sinews of war, indispensable for any revolutionary party, were lacking—money and supporters.

It was only by dint of stubborn perseverance and hard work

that Stalin gradually succeeded in reorganizing the shattered groups of Communists in the Caucasus. In his distant retreat in Europe Lenin was preparing new plans which would make it possible for these groups to become active once more. They were strange and peculiar plans and in carrying them out Stalin was to play the leading part.

THE GREAT EX

THE YEARS 1907-1908 MARK THE HEIGHT OF POST-REVOLUTIONARY reaction in Russia, and during this period all revolutionary parties had their powers of endurance put to the most severe test. In the confusion of 1905-1906 it was the Bolsheviks who suffered most. Their greatest leaders were either banished or cast into prison. Lenin, at the head of the Party's élite, was obliged to leave the country, and the great work of revolution, which had only just been begun, came to a standstill. The main difficulty with which the Party had to contend at this time was lack of funds. There was no money either for propaganda purposes or the private needs of the members. Lenin was living in Paris, and he and Trotsky had only one pair of boots between them, which they took turns to wear on high days and holidays. But even more serious than the personal destitution of its leaders was the paralysis of the Party due to lack of funds. Often a few roubles would have been sufficient to save the life of a supporter or enable him to escape from Siberia. But more often than not even this trifling sum was not forthcoming! Before the failure of the Revolution, large sums had poured into the coffers of the Party. Everybody contributed—industrial magnates, writers, and even members of Court circles! It was the fashion from time to time to send a couple of thousand roubles to the Party funds. Maxim Gorki, the famous millionaire Morozov, several landowners, Chicherin, and Krassin were regular subscribers. Only recently Maxim Gorki expressed surprise at the ease with which capitalists could be found willing to give

money for the purpose of abolishing Capitalism. After the Revolution, however, the situation changed. Morozov, who had given hundreds of thousands to the Communists, committed suicide; a number of friendly landowners were sent into exile, others grew timorous; and even Krassin, the "finance minister" of the Party, was left high and dry.

Lenin tried hard to discover fresh means of replenishing the Party coffers. The first suggestion for the achievement of this end came from Krassin, who put forward the bright idea of marrying good-looking young Communists to rich widows whose dowries would help to swell the Party funds. And it was through his instrumentality that the Communist Ignatyev married the rich heiress of Schmidt, the Moscow manufacturer, and in due course handed the whole of the dowry over to his Party. But when the Communist Viktor, after having made a successful marriage, refused to give his wife's money to the Party and consented to do so only after a Party court had been held and he had been threatened with death, Lenin dropped all further experiments along these lines, and ordered Krassin to have recourse to the time-honoured expedient adopted by all revolutionaries, and to forge bank-notes.

It was in Berlin, where Krassin was a director of Siemens, the internationally renowned electrical works, that the first attempt of the kind was made. But it failed. The Berlin police discovered what was going on, and the affair created a scandal. A Party court was held, and with considerable difficulty the matter was hushed up. Krassin then sent his friend Gorki to America to raise subscriptions, and founded a number of more or less fantastic enterprises in Berlin, none of which, however, managed to pay its way.

The only practical method, however, was evolved by Lenin himself. He decided to have recourse to the famous Exes. "Ex" stood for the "Expropriation of Private Property," for the accomplishment of which armed Communists were to break into business houses, banks, and post offices, take the money they

found, and hand it over to the Party. Even for Lenin the order to carry out Exes constituted a daring venture. Not every member of the Party was ready to acquiesce in deeds of plunder, and many threatened to leave the "Party of brigandage."

To calm down his followers, Lenin was obliged to write some pamphlets in which the Exes were theoretically justified. But he was then faced with the problem of finding suitable agents to carry out his policy. This was by no means easy. Wholly trustworthy men like Krassin were not fitted for acts of plunder, while those who were cut out for the job might undertake it merely in order to fill their own pockets. The only other absolutely reliable man in the Party, who seemed to have all the necessary qualifications, was Comrade Stalin, with his band of Caucasian Bolsheviks. Stalin, who at that time went by the name of Comrade Koba, immediately agreed. The task from which the cultivated members of the Central Committee shrank back in horror, he regarded as being all in the day's work for the furtherance of the Cause. All he asked was to be allowed to choose his own men, to which Lenin naturally gave his consent. And thus a heroic period in Stalin's life was inaugurated—the period of the Exes.

Under the nickname of Koba, the erstwhile theorist of the Georgian Theological Seminary became the most notorious brigand in the Caucasus—no mean achievement in a country which was the home of brigands! His band of trusty assistants and associates soon won the appellation of "Transcaucasian Activists," whom the authorities and the public found it hard to distinguish from the ordinary bandits who infested the Caucasus. But Stalin imposed strict discipline on his gang, and for a while played the robber-chief in true Oriental fashion. The qualities he displayed in this capacity proved that the sombre and taciturn Party fanatic was the right man for the calling which in the past might have led to the foundation of an Asiatic dynasty, but in the present instance placed the "chieftain" at the head of a world Power.

Stalin displayed masterly skill in his choice of men. He attached but little importance to their knowledge of Marx or the purity of their revolutionary record. The chief qualities for which he looked were courage, contempt for life, predatory instincts, and that extraordinary Caucasian sense of honour among bandits which sometimes makes the most hardened brigand a good and honourable member of society.

The majority of Chieftain Stalin's followers were Caucasians, fellow-countrymen whose language and mentality he thoroughly understood. In those days the members of the little highland tribes, illiterate, powerful men, used to flock to join the "Radicals" whom, ever since the Revolution of 1905, they had regarded as the god-sent heralds of an age of free brigandage. Stalin's band of Armenian, Georgian, and Mohammedan Communists knew but little about the ultimate aims of the World Revolution, though they remembered the days of the Caucasian Holy War of Liberation very well. They knew that under the leadership of Comrade Koba they were now at liberty to plunder, shoot, create disturbances, and risk their lives to their hearts' content, which was all the majority of them cared about. Moreover, most of them, like Stalin, hated everything connected with the established order of things. In different circumstances all, including even Stalin, would have become ordinary brigands, and now they called themselves Marxists or Transcaucasian Activists, but it all amounted to the same thing in the end. The true Marxists in Russia used to intimidate their opponents by the mere mention of these Activists.

At the head of these Transcaucasian Activists, Stalin succeeded in carrying out a series of the most daring escapades, the maddest raids and the most notorious acts of pillage and plunder. All his gifts for conspiracy, his rude and saturnine manner, his personal probity, and his monkish cruelty found expression in these exploits which formed the actual core of his pre-revolutionary career.

In the present chapter I shall describe only one of his great-

est Exes, the attack on the cashier of the Tiflis branch of the Russian State Bank. This mad and murderous exploit was prepared down to the smallest detail with mathematical accuracy by the best heads in the Party—Lenin, Krassin, and Stalin. In June 1907, Krassin heard that a huge sum of Government money was to be sent from St. Petersburg to Tiflis. He immediately informed Stalin of the fact. The money must at all costs be secured for the Party. Stalin took steps accordingly. His best and perhaps only friend, the illiterate Bolshevik whose name has become famous in almost every quarter of the globe, faithful as a dog and brave as a lion, the Armenian Kamo, was sent disguised as an officer to Finland, where Lenin happened to be living at the time. Lenin made the bombs for the exploit with his own hands, and, armed with weapons and bombs, Kamo returned to Tiflis. Comrade Koba, the modern Rinaldo Rinaldini, could get possession of the money only by an open fight, and from the moment it left St. Petersburg it was not once allowed out of sight of his Activists, who punctually reported its safe arrival in Tiflis.

At eight o'clock on the morning of June 13, 1907, Comrades Koba (Stalin) and Kamo (Ter Petrosian) met in the Tilipuchuri tavern in Palace Street, near the old Theological Seminary. They were birds of a feather; Kamo, gloomy, taciturn, and strong of muscle, was if anything even more primitive than Koba. The two were apparently in high spirits that day. From the famous Tilipuchuri cellar bar, where princes and other Georgian magnates used to sit carousing till the early hours of the morning at the same table with the simplest kintos and suspicious characters, they could see the barrack-like building of the Seminary. With a smile Stalin described to his rough companion the days when he used to study the wisdom of the Church liturgy. Today the pockets of both men were stuffed full of dynamite bombs. Before long the two friends were joined by other gaunt and haggard spectres. They moved to a larger table and ordered bottle after bottle of Georgian wine, which

acts as a stimulant without intoxicating. In any case it was almost impossible to make Stalin drunk. At about half-past nine two quietly dressed women appeared at the door of the tavern, Patia Goldava and Anna Zulamlidze. They signalled with a handkerchief; this meant: "The Post Office Inspector Leon has just handed the packet to Kurdyukov, the cashier, and Golovnya, the accountant." The band immediately broke up, and Stalin paid the bill.

A carriage was driving slowly through the streets of Tiflis. In it sat the cashier and the accountant with the packet of banknotes in front of them. Everything was peaceful again, and, as far as was humanly possible, all precautions had been taken for the safety of the money. The cashier's carriage was followed by another full of well-armed military officials, and both vehicles were escorted by a detachment of mounted Cossacks. It would have been impossible to devise a safer method of conveying the money through Tiflis.

At half-past nine, the cavalcade passed the Golovinsky Prospekt, the main street of Tiflis, drove past the Viceroy's Palace, turned into Erivan Square, and entered Zololak Street. As the carriages drove past Prince Zumbatov's house, a bomb was flung from the roof of the building at the first carriage. So terrific was the explosion that all the windows in that quarter of the town were broken. At the same moment some men on foot opened a regular bombardment on the Cossacks with bombs and revolvers. There was a terrible panic. Men, women, and children scattered in all directions; revolvers were fired; the bodies of the cashier and the accountant were flung out of the first carriage by the force of the explosion, and lay mangled and bleeding in the street. The mounted Cossacks tried in vain to offer resistance. Meanwhile, the horses of the first carriage containing the money, having miraculously escaped injury, were bolting up the street. A man ran in front of them and threw another bomb at their feet. A deafening explosion was heard, and the horses fell to the ground. From the opposite corner of the

street a man on horseback wearing an officer's uniform rode up to the carriage which was in flames, seized the money, and vanished like a flash, firing with his revolver at the passers-by and the Cossacks as he fled. The whole Ex had lasted only a few minutes. The man who had flung the bombs was Comrade Koba-Stalin. The man in officer's uniform who had snatched the money from the burning carriage was his friend Kamo.

When the fumes from the dynamite had cleared, fifty dead and wounded were found scattered about Zololak Street. The booty amounted to 341,000 roubles, in five-hundred-rouble notes, numbered consecutively from AM 62900 upwards—unheard-of wealth for the impoverished Party!

The sensation caused by the affair was unparalleled. The whole of the Russian police were mobilized, but, as usual, no trace of the criminals could be found. Not only was Stalin a pastmaster at overt action, but he also had a genius for keeping conspiracies secret. Comrade Koba was certainly suspected of having had a finger in the pie, but it was impossible to prove anything against him. The concealment and subsequent transport of the money, like the Ex itself, constituted one of the masterpieces of the future dictator.

Miles away from the town, near the village of Dushet, and once more in a busy inn, the heroes of the day, Koba, Kamo, and their assistants, met. Comparatively easy though the capture of the money may have been, to conceal it was likely to prove much more difficult. Even for the romantic and predatory Caucasians, this robbery, carried out in broad daylight close to the Viceroy's Palace, was unheard of, unprecedented. Probably no such sensational event had occurred in the Georgian capital since the historic abduction by Shamil of the Georgian princesses from Tsinondaly near Tiflis fifty years previously. The prestige of the Russian Empire was at stake. No stone must be left unturned to bring the criminals to justice.

Stalin was fully alive to the difficulties confronting him, and

the conference in the village of Dushet lasted some considerable time. The problem of how to convey the money to Lenin was for the moment less important than the question of how to hide it from the police.

In all Tiflis there was perhaps only one man who had not heard of the Communist raid, and he was a harmless professor of astronomy, wholly detached from the world, who was the head of the Tiflis Observatory. The worthy professor spent night after night at his telescope, and during the day he was in the habit of resting after his strenuous wanderings across the heavens. Naturally he hardly ever met a soul, and as far as the police and politics were concerned, was an absolutely innocent creature. Stalin resolved to turn the reputation of this learned man to account for his own ends, and one night, when the astronomer was, as usual, at his telescope, Kamo stole into his little bedroom and, ripping open the scholar's hard narrow mattress, placed the packet inside it. He then carefully sewed the mattress up again. The astronomer noticed nothing, unless possibly it was that his poor scholar's bed seemed a little bit harder than usual.

Not one of the heroes of this raid was caught. Stalin apparently spent quite a long time unmolested in Tiflis, and then went back to his ordinary work in Baku and patiently waited for the excitement to subside. Then he took the money to St. Petersburg where the great engineer, Leonid Krassin, who occupied a position of considerable importance, was waiting for him.

There was but one cloud to mar Comrade Koba's joy. The numbers of the stolen bank-notes had been published by the Government in all the Russian newspapers and communicated to all the banks abroad, with the result that it would not be at all easy to make use of them. The leader of the Caucasian Activists was not qualified to solve this complicated financial problem. The use of money, to his credit be it said, was never his strong point, and to him the obstacle was insuperable. But for

Krassin, the "financier" of the Party, the overcoming of such difficulties was child's play. As an old technician in the art of revolution, he was prepared for such tasks.

In spite of Stalin's misgivings, a certain lady named Fanny, who went by the name of the "White Woman" among the members of the Party, and was by profession an artist and by conviction a Marxist, was asked to collaborate. With the help of a microscope and a few instruments, specially invented for the purpose by Krassin, "White Fanny" altered the numbers of the bank-notes, and only two were destroyed in the process.

So most of the notes could now be changed in Russia by the Communist Ignatyev without difficulty. Only a small number found their way to Paris, where a Communist, nicknamed "Little Father," was entrusted with the task of changing them. "Little Father," however, was unlucky. Somehow or other the Paris police unearthed the history of these five-hundred-rouble notes, and "Little Father" was obliged to serve a term of imprisonment under his proper name, which was Wallach. Incidentally he has never been able to forgive the Paris police for their smartness on this occasion, and today the latter would take care, if ever "Little Father" were to visit Paris again, not to remind him of this episode in his career. At the present moment "Little Father" is known neither by that name nor that of Wallach, but as Comrade Litvinov, Foreign Minister to the Union.

Stalin did not wait for the numbers on all the bank-notes to be altered. At home in the Caucasus the Activists were asking for further tasks to be set them. True, 341,000 roubles constituted a vast sum, but it was not nearly large enough to overthrow Tsarism. Lenin was constantly making fresh demands, and ever more banks, jewellers' shops, and post offices were destined to feel the weight of Stalin's hand. His example soon created a sort of school, and the number of bandits in the Caucasus and the rest of Russia rose to alarming proportions. Many of these bandits also called themselves Communists without hav-

ing the smallest intention of handing over their booty to fill the Party coffers.

In any case it was quite impossible to check the sums stolen, and there was nothing to prevent the bandits from feathering their own nests. It was only behind Stalin's low brow that such ideas never took shape. He was then, and is still, the most honest man in the Party as far as money is concerned. He never ventured to touch a penny of the hundreds of thousands, if not millions, that he stole, either for himself or his Activists, although they frequently suffered great privations together. The whole of the booty, to the last rouble, found its way to Lenin.

Stalin himself alone knows the precise number of raids and acts of plunder performed by the Activists, and he is not the man to talk about them. The full details of only a few of his famous Exes have been revealed to the narrow circle of Caucasian revolutionaries. But even these few instances bear eloquent testimony to the extraordinary heroism and courage and the cold-blooded brutality of the dictator.

We shall describe a few more of Stalin's famous Exes in the next chapter.

ROBBER RAIDS IN THE CAUCASUS

ABOUT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR 1907, A MEEK-LOOKING MAN, named Pito Ozkuri, of the Jewish tribe of Uria, presented himself at the offices of T.*, a Georgian cloth merchant in a large way of business, and politely asked to see the head of the firm, to whom he had an important communication to make. The old man appeared, led Pito to an inner room, and with true Georgian hospitality opened a bottle of wine and waited patiently to hear what the important communication could be. When the bottle was empty, Pito took an envelope from his pocket and handed it to T. "My friend Zozo Djugashvili," he said, "who is ever brooding over the fate of the people, sends you this letter."

Even the cloth merchant T. had heard of Zozo Djugashvili, and knew that he was a suspicious character, half Georgian and half Ossete, whose father must have been a robber. He also knew that he had attained no position in life and had had a hand in many a shady affair, that he despised those who plied an honest trade, and was an expert at handling both arms and men. It was accordingly with some trepidation that he opened the envelope. In a brief but determined note, Zozo informed T. that he had decided henceforward to devote some of the money the good gentleman had made as an honest cloth merchant to the cause of the people and told him that once a week he was to hand over the whole of his day's takings to Zozo himself or one of his trusted agents. On other days of the week, worthy Mr. T. might, for all he cared, continue to sell his goods for his own profit.

* The details of the events here described were given to the author by T. in person.

The letter was illustrated with graphic drawings of what would happen to honest Mr. T. if he refused to acquiesce in Zozo's demands. There were two bombs with burning fuses, a coffin, a lacerated corpse, and two crossed daggers! As the unfortunate cloth merchant had probably never in his life read a detective story, the letter and drawings upset him very much. He opened another bottle of wine and proceeded to pour out his plaint into Pito's ear. One day he worked to pay the taxes, the next to bribe the police, and on the third to have the wherewithal for acts of charity. And now he was to be expected to devote a whole day to Zozo, to the Ossete, as he contemptuously called him!

But Pito showed no inclination to be drawn into abstract discussions, and, courteously excusing himself, he promised to come back in a week, either alone or with Zozo, and took his leave. As he said, he still had a great deal to do! And indeed that same day he visited Gorolashvili and Chorchonashvili, two rich Georgian merchants, both of whom belonged to the tribe of Uria. This was Pito Ozkuri's own tribe and he preferred to deal with members of it, if only because he knew most about their financial position. It is impossible to say how many people he visited in the course of the next few days; all that is known is that, when he returned to Zozo with his report, he presented him with a long list of names of merchants who in future were prepared to place their coffers at the disposal of the Left Wing of the Russian Socialist Party. He also mentioned the names of one or two who, like T., had not been altogether convinced of the necessity for these contributions, and Stalin accordingly decided to honour these frivolous objectors with a personal visit. Accompanied by four of his partisans armed to the teeth, he appeared at T.'s offices and was welcomed with wine and roast mutton by the worthy cloth merchant who believed in keeping up good old customs.

In short business-like sentences, Stalin explained the situation to him. The Party required money, and by fair means or

foul Stalin had to raise it. God above knew, he had no wish to murder his fellow-countryman, though to do so would be as easy as winking; but as T. paid taxes for the Government to leave him in peace, and bribed the police to do likewise, it was only right and proper that he should pay the Activist terrorists something in order that they might look with favour upon his business. If he refused, the Activists, to their great regret, would find themselves obliged to act as the police would do if they were not bribed, and the Government if he refused to pay taxes.

Stalin was certainly himself convinced of the iron logic of his politico-economical explanations, which also appeared quite plausible to the hospitable merchant. But the latter was no fool and asked to make one small stipulation. Stalin was quite reasonable and consented to discuss the matter and eventually gave his solemn promise to see that his friend should not be troubled by any other terrorist organization. If anybody attempted anything of the sort, Stalin declared that he would do all in his power to stop it. This, at all events, sounded reassuring, and a festive meal lent a sort of moral sanction to the arrangement. That same day Stalin received the first payment. It need give rise to no surprise that neither T., Gorolashvili, nor Chorcho-nashvili ever thought of informing the police of these extortions for, in the eyes of these native merchants, the Russian police were only a legalized form of Activist terrorists. There was very little difference between them, a mere matter of externals, which the untrained eye of the native merchant could hardly distinguish. Only in extremity would he have tried to play off one robber band against the other. But, as a rule, he found it safer to keep the police at arm's length from himself and his money. Even if they had intervened successfully against the Activists, they would not have been able to protect him from eventually falling a victim to some blood feud on the part of the latters' friends or relatives. And, in any case, he would have been obliged at least to double his usual bribe to the police. So it would have served no purpose to appeal to them. As for a private

bodyguard, unlike the oil magnates of Baku, the Tiflis merchants had no such protection.

For some months Stalin found that his new plan worked extremely well. At stated intervals he called upon the friendly merchants, chatted with them about their business, listened in a leisurely manner, over a plate of roast mutton, to their complaints about bad times, pocketed the money, and left. But it must not be supposed that giver and receiver altogether trusted each other. On the contrary, Stalin was constantly on his guard. He always went armed with bombs and a revolver, and often accompanied by a few friends, and by his manner made it perfectly plain that he was prepared at any moment to make use of his weapons. Even over the wine, with which his hospitable hosts plied him, the mistrustful expression never left his face, and at the slightest sound, he would spring to his feet and seize his pistols. In a trice the peaceful visitor was transformed into a sinister fighter! The compact between the Activist terrorists and the Tiflis magnates was too brittle for Stalin to rely on it for long.

Nor was he mistaken. One day old T.'s young son returned to Tiflis and, on being told of the extraordinary arrangement with Stalin, protested violently. The next time the leader of the Activists came to the office, the young man informed him that no further payments would be made. Stalin shrugged his shoulders, turned away, and, as a parting thrust, swore he would send his Activists to fetch the money all the same. But to give the young man time to think over his decision, he magnanimously granted him a few days' respite. Sure enough, before long, four ruffians turned up at the office with Pito Ozkuri as their spokesman, and asked for an interview. Old T. received the visitors, and as usual offered them wine and listened to what they had to say. This time they demanded a fine of a thousand roubles in addition to the continuation of the payments. Hardly were the words out of their mouths, when Pirumov, the Inspector of the first Tiflis Police District, with ten stalwart police

officers suddenly appeared from a room at the back. Everything took place so quickly that the terrorists had not even time to seize their weapons. They were disarmed, and, as usual, unmercifully flogged on the spot, and then taken to the police station.

Young T. was full of elation over his victory, at least for the time being, and the news of his feat was eagerly discussed in all the shops in the Tiflis Bazaar on the very next day. But everyone did not feel equally enthusiastic over the matter, and he received many warnings to be on his guard against Stalin's revenge. If at that time he had wished to insure his life he would have found it very difficult to get any Insurance Company to grant him a policy.

A few days later, on February 28, 1907, late in the evening, just as the T. family were about to retire to bed, there was a knock on the front door. Terrified out of their lives, they opened the door, and on the step, with a revolver in each hand, they saw Stalin all alone without any associates. "Don't get excited," he said, seeing the expression on their faces, "I just want a few words with you."

He entered the dining-room, sat down at the table, and began to reproach T. at great length for his treachery. "I trusted you," he said, "and sent you my own men, and you could think of nothing better to do than to hand them over to the police!"

When he had given full expression to his indignation, he turned to business. "In the cellar of your house," he said to the head of the firm, "there are several *kutans* (earthenware jars) full of gold pieces; hand them over, and I will say no more about the matter."

Stalin had a most efficient intelligence service, and it was perfectly true that T. had several earthenware jars full of gold pieces hidden in his cellar. The old man was dumbfounded! He hated the thought of parting with the money, which he had hoarded up in case of need and to provide for his old age, and

the demand of this adventurer Djugashvili, whom he considered he had already subsidized far too long, infuriated him.

"Listen a moment, my son," he said, turning to Stalin, who still held his revolver in his hand, "that is not at all nice of you! You cannot behave in this shameless and impudent manner in my house. Are you a Georgian or a swine? You have come here as my guest, so why have you got that revolver in your hand? My little grandchildren are asleep in the next room and would be terrified if it were to go off! Is that the way to thank me for having supported you for so long?"

"Hand over those jars, and we will part good friends," interrupted Stalin.

The old man then made him an offer. "My son," he said gently, "leave me my jars, and I will give you all the goods you wish!" Once more Stalin was ready to listen to reason, and agreed to take a thousand roubles down and, on the following day, two suits of clothes, three overcoats, and five pairs of boots. It was wintertime, and the ragged Activists were shivering with cold!

He pocketed the money, courteously took his leave and went out quietly so as not to disturb the children. Hardly had he got outside the door, however, when he was seized by a detachment of police under the command of warrant officer Ossipov, bound hand and foot, and taken to the police station. Unbeknown to old T., his son had summoned the police while his father was talking to Stalin. On the following day, Stalin was brought up before Commissioner Martynov, the head of the Tiflis police. But the prisoner refused to make any statement, while the two T.'s, who had been subpœnaed as witnesses, but had meanwhile been turning things over in their minds, also refused to open their mouths, and once again it was found impossible to arraign Stalin before a court of law. The only step the police could take without the help of the law was to send him into exile. Colonel Martynov availed himself of this right,

and Stalin was sent to Solvychegorsk in Siberia. But he escaped in the following year.

From the day Stalin was banished, old T. had not a moment's peace. The hairdresser, the neighbours, the baker, and even the policeman round the corner, came daily to inquire whether his son had been murdered, for there could be no doubt that Stalin's friends would wreak their revenge. And, as a matter of fact, so many different attempts were made on young T.'s life that in the end he was obliged to flee from Tiflis and ultimately to leave Georgia.

T. was by no means Stalin's only victim, and the visits he paid to many other rich Georgian merchants at this time were equally profitable. However great the secrecy with which any of these unfortunate gentlemen buried their money in their cellars or gardens, Stalin was informed within the next few days. He would appear at the merchant's house that night, and refuse to go until the latter had handed him over his treasure. He obtained his information about the people who had buried their treasure through the woman who was at that time his mistress, Marie Arensberg, the wife of a German business man residing in Tiflis. Her husband's friendly relations with the native merchants put her in a position to inform her lover of many financial transactions. Thus, even in his choice of a mistress, Stalin contrived to serve the ends of his Party. Even Lenin could not expect more!

These semi-friendly extortions from terrified merchants, accompanied by wine drinking and varied by occasional nocturnal visits, did not, of course, solve the problem of supplying the Party with funds for long. This "dry" work, as it was called in Party circles, supplied, as it were, merely a basis for the real Exes, in which men fought tooth and nail for their lives. And Stalin carried out the "wet" Exes with precisely the same cold-blooded intrepidity as he did his courteous extortions from merchants and storekeepers, though for them he required assistants of a different calibre from meek little Pito Ozkuri.

He carried out a series of daring raids in association with the famous Georgian terrorist, Lashkarishvili, the noblest and bravest of the band. All those who knew him say that Lashkarishvili was the embodiment of all the Georgian virtues. Lean as a vulture, with broad shoulders and the strength of a giant, he resembled some hero of ancient saga. Unlike the illiterate Kamo, he was also endowed with intellectual gifts of a high order. When the work of secret conspiracy was at a standstill for a while, he would travel through the rugged mountain districts of Georgia, visiting the villages and hamlets of the various tribes and practising the noble and time-honoured art of reconciling people with one another. The inhabitants of the mountain gorges would come to him with their requests and their differences, regarding him as the one and only incorruptible judge. And through the judgments he passed in regard to these mountain feuds, he came to be looked upon as a veritable Georgian Solomon.

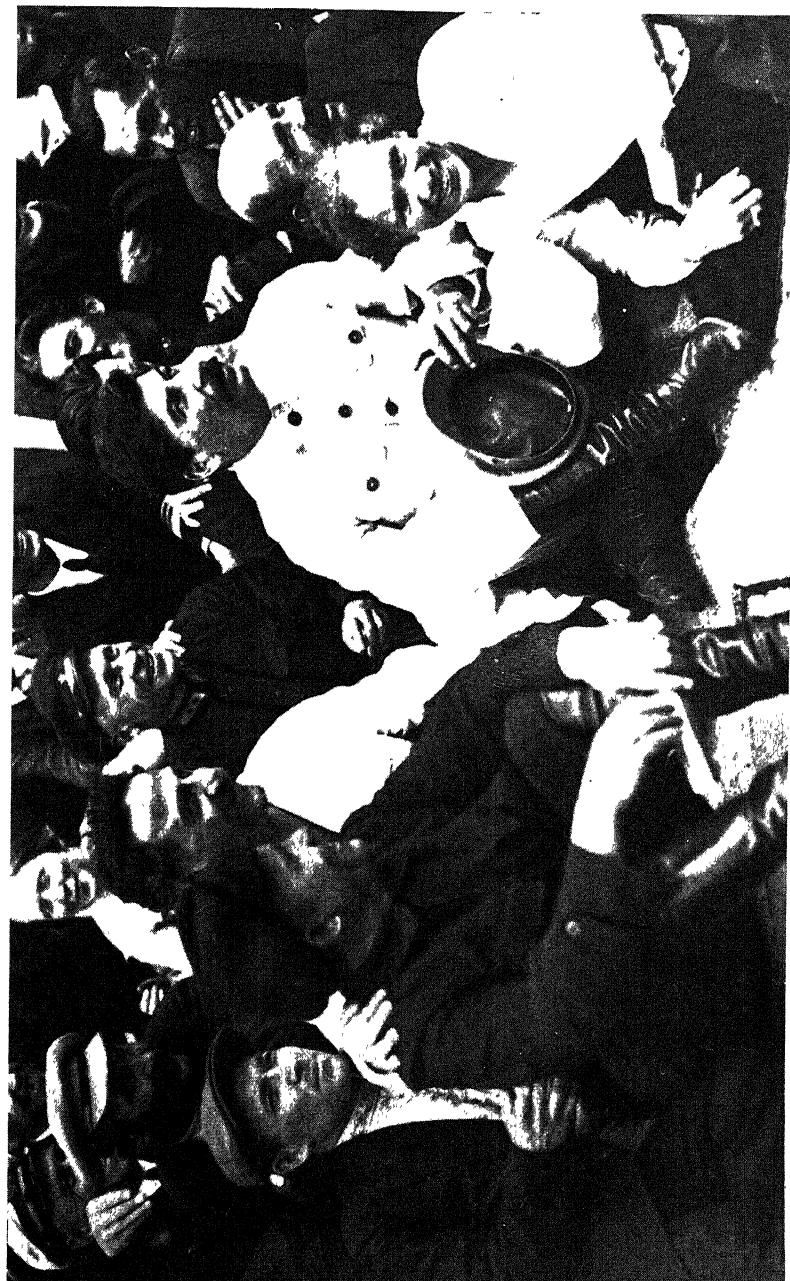
It was to this man that Stalin appealed on behalf of the Exes, which in addition to personal courage demanded a certain intellectual alertness. When, as a result of his escape from Siberia and his repeated Exes, both in Tiflis and elsewhere in Georgia, the place became too hot for him, he together with Lashkarishvili and another Bolshevik called Ivanov, whose proper name is unknown, went to a quiet little Cossack town in the north. What they proposed to do there none of them had the slightest idea. All they knew was that the Party expected money from them, and that the town in question, which had hitherto been spared all experience of Exes, seemed in its virgin simplicity a suitable victim. On reaching the place the three men took a wretchedly cold room in the house of a family which, although revolutionary in its sympathies, was not absolutely trustworthy, and began to investigate financial conditions in the town. It did not take Stalin long to discover where the municipal Bank was situated, in which safes the loose cash was kept, at what times the Cossacks took their money out, when the cashier closed the till to

take hardening baths in the peaceful waters of the Don, and when the fat sergeant major who was the Bank watchman repaired to the Armenian tavern close by where he usually remained for an unconscionably long time.

The town, which was inhabited by Cossacks, Armenian merchants, and lower middle class Russians, had never even heard of the word Ex. Stalin hesitated for some time between robbing the Bank, the Post Office, or some other institution. At last all three agreed that it should be the Bank as they might reasonably expect to find most loose cash there. The plan of campaign was carefully and minutely worked out by Stalin in the light of his previous exploits and experiences, and with due allowance being made for altered circumstances. The deliberations lasted for hours.

Towards evening on the following day they tested their revolvers and went to the Bank. They did not go in together but at intervals, one at a time, and walked through the premises. By the time they had all collected there was only one customer in the Bank, and he tactfully broke off his conversation with the cashier and took his departure so as not to detain the newcomers who were just approaching the counter. Stalin went up to the paying-out counter and leant across it. "Cashier," he said darkly, "we have come to clear the till!" Utterly bewildered, the cashier looked up at this extraordinary customer, and saw two revolvers pointed at his nose. Meanwhile Ivanov, quick as lightning, had closed the door of the Bank and put up in the window a notice they had brought with them to say that the Bank would be closed for half an hour.

At the same moment Lashkarishvili jumped over the counter, and the sight of his belt bulging with bombs deprived both the other two bank clerks of any desire to offer resistance. Stalin then made a dive for the till, and stuffed the bank-notes into his pockets. "Now the Bank can be opened again," he observed, as cool as a cucumber. "But don't you dare to lift a finger for half



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STALIN AT THE SIXTEENTH PARTY CONGRESS
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an hour!" he added, turning to the officials as he left, "or we shall put the *Abreks** on to you!"

This reference to the Caucasian Abreks had much the same effect as Lashkarishvili's belt. The three bandits left the Bank unmolested, and outside disappeared in different directions. From the Armenian's cellar, the sergeant major, purple in the face and quite drunk, looked up, laughed idiotically, and waved to them.

How much money this Ex brought in, however, even Stalin, whom it chiefly concerned, never knew. For in spite of its brilliant success it had an unexpectedly grievous ending. On reaching home Stalin stuffed the bundle of bank-notes into the stove of the room. Lashkarishvili and Ivanov had not yet returned. He waited some time in vain, and then, leaving the money behind him for safety's sake, set out to look for them. In case the police managed to get on their tracks, they had arranged to meet close to the ruins of the old Palace of the Khans, for it would have been easy to hide in its maze of corridors. The night was cold and frosty. Stalin walked round the walls impatiently. At last Ivanov turned up. He too was frozen to the marrow. He did not know what had happened to Lashkarishvili. Perhaps he had gone home by a roundabout way.

When it was dark the couple decided to go back to the town. They walked very carefully past their lodgings and were astonished to see that Lashkarishvili must have got home, for there was a light burning in his room.

They hurried upstairs and opening the door of the room Stalin uttered a loud cry of despair. Lashkarishvili was sitting warming himself over the stove, which was burning brightly, serenely unaware of the fact that inside it, at the back of the wooden blocks, the whole day's booty lay hidden! With one spring Stalin was at the stove. Regardless of the pain, he thrust

* Robber knights of the mountains who often swear themselves to an unceasing feud against the Russians.—*Translator.*

his hand into the blazing fire. But it was too late! He managed to save only one five-hundred-rouble note from the ashes. And even that was badly scorched. The rest were irrevocably lost!

The three men were wild with despair. All their trouble, privation, and risk had been in vain! Their joy at having once again come to the rescue of the Party turned to shame and desperation. They were also afraid that they would be suspected, and that people would not believe the money had been burnt in a stove. To suspicious minds among their friends, even Stalin's burnt hand might not provide conclusive proof.

"Since when have Activists burnt money in the stove?" Lenin would demand. Stalin bound up his badly burnt hand in his head-cloth. "In three days' time," he said darkly, "we must get twice that sum, otherwise we shan't be Communists any longer!" In cases of such extreme urgency there was only one way of being certain of getting money quickly in the Caucasus and it was undoubtedly accompanied by considerable danger. It meant raiding a train to which a mail van conveying money was attached. And Stalin decided to have recourse to this measure. Lashkarishvili and Ivanov agreed.

In any case it was imperative for them to vanish from the town where a search for the bandits was already on foot.

That same night they left the town, and at the next station took the train for Rostov. They succeeded in evading the police fairly easily, and reached Rostov without mishap. Sitting down in a little station bar all three began eagerly to study the time-table with a view to their next exploit. They discovered that on the following day a train carrying mails was expected to leave Rostov for some station in the direction of the Caucasus, and to this train Stalin pinned his hopes. Rostov was an industrial town and the revolutionary Labour groups connected with the factories and railway depots were well known to him. A secret formula, uttered at the right moment, secured him the confidence of the railway officials, and he had no difficulty in finding out which van was destined to carry the mails and money

consignments on the following day, as also the destination of the registered packages. It was an ordinary goods van with a tiny window and two little compartments for the railway police who were to travel in it. When the mails and registered parcels containing money and valuables had been placed in the van, the police officers got in and the stationmaster himself shut and sealed the heavy door. Only his colleague, the stationmaster of the station to which the train was bound was allowed to break the seals. During the night, when the van was being watched only by friendly railway employees, Stalin, Lashkarishvili, and Ivanov stole across the metals, while the railwaymen were looking the other way, and softly as cats got into the van.

Next door to the two compartments for the police was a small lavatory for their use, and into this tiny space, in which they could only stand up squeezed together like sardines, they hid themselves until the train started. The risk they ran was not very great. Even had they been discovered before the sealing of the van and the departure of the train, they would probably have been taken for stowaways trying to travel for nothing and turned out or at most flogged. If the worst came to the worst, they could have whipped out their revolvers and with the connivance of the passive railwaymen managed to get away. But there was no need for this. From the lavatory they could hear the mail-bags being thrown into a heap and the bags of money being carefully piled up. Then with a clatter of rifles, five police officers entered the van, and after a few short words from the stationmaster, the heavy doors were slowly closed. The hammering of the leaden seals could be heard, then a sharp whistle and the train steamed out of the station. The policemen took out their tobacco and their flasks of vodka, and began eating their provisions. They had a long journey before them.

Slowly Stalin opened the lavatory door and on soft saffian soles cautiously entered the compartment. Before the police officers knew what was happening they lay gagged and bound hand and foot in a corner of the van. The terrorists were masters

of the situation! And now the most difficult part of their task began. The train was going at full speed, the van was securely locked and sealed, and to escape from it was obviously out of the question. It was impossible even to throw the bags of money out of the tiny barred window, nor was there much time left for reflection. The first thing they did was to hew a hole in the floor of the van with an axe they found belonging to the police, and the four bags of money were dropped through the hole in the floor. At first Lashkarishvili wished to follow the bags through the hole, but Stalin prevented him. Anyone attempting to jump through the train going at full speed ran the risk of having his head torn off as soon as his feet touched the ground. The three therefore started hurriedly to cut through the wall of the van with the axe, their rifles, and their knives. But they had to make haste, for in the distance they could already see the chimneys and spires of a town. Soon they burst the door open and Ivanov, the nimblest of them, was the first to drop on to the line; Lashkarishvili followed, but Stalin remained standing at the door. His burnt hand was hurting him and he was afraid that in jumping his strength might fail him. So with cold-blooded deliberation he waited until the train got nearer the station and began to slow down. Meanwhile, however, the alarm had been given. Someone had seen Lashkarishvili jump from the train. But, strange to say, the train was not stopped and the officials decided to inform the police only at the next station. Or was it that the engine-driver, an old revolutionary, because he did not know that Stalin had not jumped off, suddenly refused to be behind time in arriving at his destination?

This raid, carried out with such cold-blooded calculation by Stalin, was eminently successful. Just as the train was running into the station, he dropped into the soft undergrowth of the station garden, and the police, who were on the spot a few minutes later, failed to catch him. It was only on the following day that he came across Lashkarishvili in some village. He had secured two of the bags of gold. Ivanov must have found the other

two. For days Stalin and Lashkarishvili wandered about the district in the neighbourhood of the line, looking for their vanished accomplice and the two bags of gold. But they failed to find either him or the money. Ivanov had vanished without leaving a trace. However, the other two sacks were sufficient to replenish the Party funds for the time being. In spite of the most careful investigations they could not discover what had become of Ivanov or where he had gone.

Twelve years later, Lashkarishvili was staying in his Georgian home in the country near Gori and heard from a friend, a landowner in the district, that a few years previously an extremely shy and retiring gentleman from Russia had bought some land near by and had in a short space of time converted the property, which had been badly neglected by its late owner, into a blooming garden. The stranger, whose long white beard lent him an air of distinction, was said to be extraordinarily popular among the native landowners. Lashkarishvili accordingly decided to call on him. Accompanied by his friend, he rode out to the Russian's estate. At the door of the house stood a sturdy old gentleman with a bunch of grapes in his hand.

Lashkarishvili jumped from his horse and went up to him. "Good day, Comrade Ivanov!" he said calmly.

That same day the stranger vanished. What happened to him nobody ever knew except Lashkarishvili and the Georgian who had accompanied him on his visit. But the latter never mentioned the matter, though ever afterwards he always looked with great respect and awe at Lashkarishvili's huge dagger, which always hung ready to hand in its sheath.

"You will never drink Ivanov's wine again," Lashkarishvili informed the neighbouring landowners, when he returned from his short visit to the old gentleman. He had learned from Stalin how to make traitors disappear.

Stalin carried out three other Exes in association with Lashkarishvili, but we have no details about either the time, place, or result of them. Soon the friends parted. Stalin settled down

again in Baku, but after a time was sent into banishment, and Lashkarishvili returned to the mountains where he also fell into the hands of the police. His subsequent career was remarkable. After the outbreak of the revolution, he returned to Tiflis, and there met Stalin again. But after this their ways parted. Stalin remained a Russian Bolshevik while Lashkarishvili went over to the Georgian Mensheviks and Nationalists, and the two friends soon became bitter enemies.

Subsequently, as a high military official in the Nationalist Government, Lashkarishvili is said to have performed deeds of such heroism that tales about them are told to this day. Among other exploits he overpowered a Turkish armoured car and made whole regiments prisoners with a handful of Georgian soldiers. On another occasion, single-handed and without anyone to help him, he disarmed two hundred Ossete mountain brigands.

When Stalin's Soviet army poured into Georgia, Lashkarishvili fought in the van of the Georgian troops and when later on Kakutso Cholokashvili organized his last desperate insurrection against Stalin, Lashkarishvili was the first to shoot down his old friend's officials and soldiers wherever he came across them.

Stalin suppressed the Georgian insurrection with an iron hand. Ten thousand of the country's best soldiers fell in the struggle; the rest were taken prisoner and are still languishing in the prison fortress of Mtekhi.

"It is precisely because I am a Georgian myself," Stalin told the insurgents, "that I will mow you all down." Lashkarishvili alone escaped and to this day wanders fearlessly through the valleys of Khevsuria and over the snow-capped peaks of Svanetia. Stalin's spies could easily catch him. Can it be that they do not wish to do so? Has Stalin himself perhaps given a secret hint, understood only by his associates, that the authorities are not to press his old friend, the most chivalrous man of a chivalrous race, too hard in his highland retreat? Has he tacitly left him

the wilds of Svanetia and Khevsuria as a refuge? Stalin is a faithful friend.

The events here described relate to only a few of the best known and perhaps not the greatest of the Exes Stalin carried out. Many dark rumours are current which link his name with dozens of such exploits, and they are certainly not without foundation. Murder, robbery, counterfeit coining, the kidnapping of rich Caucasian oil-magnates, and various other crimes were frequently perpetrated by the revolutionary parties. And behind them all in the dim and shadowy distance, but plainly distinguishable notwithstanding, looms the mysterious guiding shadow of this legendary Georgian. From the standpoint of Western Europe such activities would seem to be anything but a good school for the training of a great statesman. And yet for thousands of years and even to this day (except in Europe) the world has been ruled by statesmen of this type. Stalin is neither the bandit nor the brigand that his enemies maintain, but a heroic fanatic, hypnotized by the power of an idea, to whom nothing is impossible. There are many brigands in the Caucasus whose deeds are often conceived on a grander scale; yet none of them has become a Stalin!

Zozo Djugashvili, the hero of the Caucasus, is far from being a bloodthirsty monster; he is a force, primitive, deep, and adamantine, which, for the sake of an idea, expresses itself as well in brigandage as in ruling a vast state. And he now rules the whole Soviet Union with the same brutal determination as he once plundered banks and trains in the Caucasus. It is precisely this cold fanaticism which characterizes every one of his activities, this instinctive call to revolution, and this strong and mighty spirit which has no ear for other forms of belief, that always filled Lenin with admiration. From the human standpoint Stalin is the most sympathetic, and from the historical standpoint the most profoundly tragic Bolshevik figure in Russia. Today he governs with ruthless fanaticism, hated or

feared by all, but pursuing his will-o'-the-wisp, the salvation of the world, with fantastic determination.

Lenin was the first who, possibly with a shudder, recognized the irresistible power of Stalin's spirit, respected it, and perhaps feared it. He called Stalin the "legendary Georgian," a title which will cling to the saturnine Caucasian hero throughout the ages.

THE EXES IN THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

STALIN'S ACTIVITIES AS A PERPETRATOR OF EXES HAVE NOT BEEN described in order to reveal him as an inveterate bandit, whose chief characteristic is a propensity to live a life of brigandage.* On the contrary! All these famous and infamous acts of plunder and extortion were merely side-shows which, as circumstances demanded, occupied Stalin only for short periods at a time. An Ex constituted an onerous, dangerous, and unpleasant Party duty, sanctioned by principle, which it was impossible to evade, and which was just as much a necessity as attending meetings or distributing leaflets. The man who carried them out was merely a member of the Party who happened to have received orders to plunder, and performed his task according to the best traditions of the Russian Revolution. For, like the technical side of revolution, the Exes also had their past and their traditions, their history and evolution, which gave them a definite place within the revolutionary organization. The idea of applying public funds to the Cause hails from the very dawn of the Russian Revolution.

The very first Russian revolutionary party, the "Narodnaia Volya" (Freedom of the People), seriously debated whether a revolutionary were morally justified in plundering the coffers

* It is naturally impossible to adduce documentary evidence in proof of the Exes which Stalin carried out with Lashkarishvili. Incidents of this kind were carefully hushed up both by the revolutionaries and the police. We can only go by hearsay. The descriptions contained in this chapter are based on reports given by Lashkarishvili himself to Prince Ch., who repeated them to me direct.

of the State and, after prolonged deliberations, decided in the affirmative and sanctioned plunder. But theoretical sanction and practical application are two very different things. And the Narodnaia Volya never succeeded in coming to deeds. Its terrorist activities, which led to the murder of Tsar Alexander II, absorbed all its energies, and after his assassination the persecution of the Party made all further activities on its part impossible. Alexander III regarded the suppression of the Narodnaia Volya as his highest mission. And he carried it out with such success that it soon ceased to exist. Its few remaining members joined the younger revolutionary parties, the Social-Democrats and the Social-Revolutionaries, which took them and their doctrine over lock, stock, and barrel. The former, whose slogan was "War on Capitalism," represented the rising generation of Russian proletarians, while the latter, with its famous "*Zemlya i Volya*" (Land and Freedom), was the peasant party.

Both parties were concerned with the problem of terrorism. The old Social-Democrats definitely rejected it, for they had no wish to tarnish their revolutionary record with the blood of the enemy. The Social-Revolutionaries, on the other hand, regarded every form of violence as a natural reaction to the "dictatorship of the nobility," and the terrorist activities of their militant groups soon revived the old question of principle, whether Exes were justifiable. But before it could be settled by the Party, it had already been decided by the opposition group, the Social-Revolutionary Maximalists, the future Left of the Social-Revolutionary Party.

One day the latter raided the Commercial Bank of Moscow and, after a regular fight, robbed it of a few hundred thousand roubles. This success settled the matter, and thenceforward Exes were sanctioned by the Social-Revolutionaries. After the division of the Social-Democrats into Mensheviks and Bolsheviks, the Central Committee of the Leninists also sanctioned Exes both in theory and practice, though it placed them under the control of the Party organization. Even in matters of plunder,

therefore, the Bolsheviks remained true to their fundamental idea of a dictatorship.

Thus the famous era of the Exes, of plunder and robbery, was inaugurated in Russia, and all the energy, acumen, and will of the best men among the revolutionaries were devoted to the most extraordinary form of conflict ever devised by a revolutionary party. In addition to the Caucasian Activists, the leaders in these activities were young workmen and students—intellectuals who had suddenly discovered bloodthirsty tendencies in themselves. Unfortunate cashiers, bank clerks, and postmen constituted the chief victims of this new form of terror.

Floods of gold poured into the revolutionary coffers. The only definitely revolutionary party which opposed the Exes was the Menshevik Social-Democratic Party, who regarded theft and murder as they had hitherto always been regarded by the civilized world—as crimes. Nevertheless, even they did not always succeed in keeping their members in check. The practice of Exes grew by leaps and bounds, and the technique of these robberies with violence, committed from political conviction, soon developed into a regular ritual. The raiders entered a bank or a shop, whipped out a revolver and cried, "Hands up!" Whereupon they took everything they could lay hands on, and if possible flung a bomb as a parting shot. The number of groups engaged in carrying out Exes increased year by year without in any way impairing the prestige of the revolutionaries. For years "Exes" and "Terror" constituted an integral part of revolutionary activity. Gradually, however, it ceased to be merely the practical expression of lofty revolutionary principles. Highly suspicious and anarchical figures made their appearance, who naturally included Exes in their programme, with the result that the movement ultimately degenerated into open brigandage.

Cases also occurred of robberies being committed without orders from the Party, and those who were guilty of them did not know how to dispose of their ill-gotten gains, as genuine

revolutionaries refused to receive them in such circumstances. Occasionally, too, ordinary tramway conductors were over-powered and murdered just for the sake of their paltry day's takings, amounting to only a few roubles. Wine bars, restaurants, and private citizens were looted, and people even robbed one another on the pretext of raising money for Party funds. Gangs of unorganized bandits terrorized Russia, and the leaders of the revolutionary parties were at their wits' end to know how to deal with the nuisance.

Matters went from bad to worse; for in addition to the Anarchist-Individualists or Anarchist-Maximalists, who were at least revolutionaries, there appeared on the scene organizations bearing such non-revolutionary names as *The Black Raven*, or *The Black Hand*, or *The Foresters*, of whose activities the genuine revolutionaries heard only when some brutal robbery with murder was reported, and in the face of such associates they found themselves quite helpless.

The climax was reached when the Anarchist-Exists appeared. They had a regular programme, according to which the plundering of other people's tills was the only activity worthy of a revolutionary. In fact this constituted the only item on their programme. Whereas the Social-Revolutionary Maximalists raided a bank with the object of founding a secret press with the proceeds, the Anarchist-Exists were content with robbery alone. If they were successful, they either squandered the money, or opened a wine bar or a tobacco business, and solemnly declared that they had done something to further the Cause of social equality.

This system of brigandage to which the ethical discussions in the Narodnaia Volya had led, provoked different responses in different quarters. The Government, of which Stolypin was at that time the head, declared a state of siege, or martial law, throughout Russia. Courts martial were instituted which always passed sentence of death. Robbers who were caught were tried and sent to the gallows within twenty-four hours, no matter to

what party they belonged. Hanging was the only form of execution for an Exist, and the revolutionaries soon nicknamed the rope "Stolypin's scarf." Another method of combating the Exes was by means of *agents provocateurs*. The police spies organized an Ex, induced revolutionaries to take part in it, or distributed the stolen booty among them, and then arrested and court-martialled them and invariably sentenced them to death. This was how official Russia reacted to the work of the Exists.

Unofficial and revolutionary Russia, on the other hand, watched the rising tide of Exes with stupefaction. The line of demarcation between politics and crime seemed to have been obliterated, and yet it was only the Mensheviks who were opposed to the Exes on principle; the other parties still hoped to be able to distinguish between robbery and politics. The people of Russia, who were the chief sufferers from all this politico-ethical chaos, were tongue-tied and terror-stricken. The mere cry of "Hands up!" was enough to petrify a whole roomful of people. Whether the young man who uttered the magic words held a bomb in his hand or an empty jam tin, nobody troubled to inquire or to find out. Cases actually occurred at this time in which dozens of stalwart men emptied their pockets on being shown an empty fruit tin. Thus, what with the White Terror and the Red Terror, the plain citizen had not a very easy time of it!

Those who were filled with the greatest indignation and horror, however, were the ordinary everyday thieves and burglars, who watched the unfair competition of the revolutionaries in their time-honoured game with consternation, and tried seriously to defend themselves. "You are fighting the Tsar and we are fighting the money-bags! We do not interfere with you, so why do you deprive us of our livelihood?" Such was the charge which the aggrieved robbers brought against their wild competitors. Soon they took serious steps to combat this mean form of competition, and the fights that took place between the "politicals" and the criminals, because they were poaching on

each other's preserves, constitute the humorous side of this phase in Russia's fight for freedom. The pickpockets and other petty criminals had good reason for regarding their livelihood as being menaced by the activities of the politicians. For not only did the latter secure the best "jobs," but they themselves often suffered by being mistaken for non-professionals. As the line of demarcation between politicals and criminals became more and more confused, ordinary criminals, who had no wish to be regarded as politicals, were to their astonishment treated as such, and court-martialled and promptly sentenced to Stolypin's scarf. This seemed to them most unfair! Owing to a few revolutionary adventurers and their idealistic programme, tried sharpers like themselves were, through an unfortunate misunderstanding, sent to the gallows for a mere trifle, which at any other time would have meant a few months' imprisonment. Thus the hatred between the two factions increased day by day, and the inmates of prisons at this period have many a tale to tell about this mutual hostility.

The Bolshevik Party alone escaped all contact with unorganized Exes. The dictatorial spirit which prevailed in it, and Stalin's military stubbornness, nipped in the bud any unauthorized attempts on the part of indiscreet members. Compared with the other Exes carried out in Russia, Stalin's performances were strictly organized military expeditions. And even if the epithet "Caucasian robber," which Lenin applied half in earnest, half in fun, to Stalin, is to the point, the difference between him and any of the Anarchist-Exists is plain enough. In any case Stalin, even at this time, did not attach much importance to emphasizing the difference. It did not matter to him who or what his Activists were, provided they obeyed him. And this the most unruly among them did as soon as he enrolled them, in spite of the fact that he took them where he could find them. For instance, in the Caucasus Mountains, there was a certain robber band who called themselves Foresters, who robbed, plundered, and cut down everything that stood in their

path. Stalin thought very highly of these men, and when, owing to losses in his own ranks, as the result of dangerous Exes, the number of Activists was considerably reduced, he sent his faithful friend Kamo into the mountains to enlist fresh recruits from the Foresters. Kamo did as he was bid; he went up to the mountains, and returned with a number of wild bandits. After a short but impressive interview with Stalin, they found they were animated by a keen desire to serve the cause of World Revolution, and were immediately enrolled as fully qualified members of the Transcaucasian Activists.

Once again Stalin was right in his judgment. The Foresters collected and recommended by Kamo proved efficient and courageous Activists with whom the most daring Exes could once more be undertaken.

Stalin conducted a ruthless war on all the independent non-Bolshevik Exists, whenever he came across them, for he could not tolerate competition of any sort. If a militant organization of Anarchists, or any similar body, made their appearance, Stalin set upon them so ruthlessly that they vanished like smoke from the district and forgot to come back. The only people he tolerated were the native Caucasian robber knights, men like the famous Kerim or Selim-Khan, for they made no political claims, and could not be eradicated from the Caucasus. Indeed, the feats of these famous brigands might do much to promote the revolutionary spirit in the mountains.

Lastly, it should be clearly understood that, although Stalin carried out all his Exes independently, before he did so he always received official orders from the Party to raise money somehow—money, always money! In this respect, the “Caucasian robber” was really only an ordinary official, an obedient officer of the Revolution, in short the faithful servant of his idolized master.

STALIN'S FRIENDS

THERE ARE BUT FEW PEOPLE WHO CAN BOAST OF BEING FRIENDS OF Stalin. A conspirator is bound to be very cautious in his choice of intimates, and nobody has grasped this principle better than the arch-conspirator Koba. Stalin is not naturally much inclined to friendship, and only tried comrades in arms and his old associates in the Exes enjoy the confidence of the dictator. How many of this old guard survive today? Very few! But those who have ever been numbered among Stalin's friends can bear testimony to the faithful, almost stubborn friendship of which he is capable. At the present moment, it is impossible to win his confidence; even in the early days it was not easy. But whenever in some heroic exploit, in a prison cell or some place of hiding, Stalin has found a man on whom he could absolutely rely, he has remained true to him, laid aside his customary gloom, and become engaging, friendly, and almost cheerful. Never once has he been mistaken in the choice of a friend, and nobody has ever had cause to regret having been picked out by him for the honour. It is to this narrow circle of friends that he shows the chivalrous side of his nature, which otherwise he hides from everybody.

Stalin is now fifty-two. At most ten men can boast of having been honoured by his confidence and friendship during these last years. Even today, when he has reached the topmost pinnacle of power, he never forgets a friend. His friendship, like his life, may be barbaric and primitive, the friendship of a robber chief, who does not really know how to express his feelings to those

of whom he is fond. If a friend and helper falls ill, Stalin sends him twenty pounds of butter and ten pounds of honey with a short note saying, "Eat this and get well; we want you!" His imagination where luxuries and necessities are concerned does not go beyond butter and honey, for he himself has never known anything better. Jenghiz-Khan used to provide for his friends in much the same way, but instead of butter and honey he sent them mutton dripping and mare's milk wherewith to regale themselves. If his friend fails to recover in spite of these attentions, Stalin summons the pick of the Russian medical profession and curtly, almost rudely orders them to put the invalid right in ten days.

In these circumstances the doctors dare not contradict him or he would accuse them of "medical sabotage," and in ten days' time they declare that his friend is restored to health even at the risk of having to pronounce him sick again in a fortnight. This they are allowed to do.

Neither Stalin nor his friends are troubled by their passions. Now and again he invites his friends to his house; a cask of old Georgian wine is opened, and, like the true Georgian he is, Stalin will give a drinking bout, though he himself drinks very little. His activities as a conspirator did not allow him to indulge in the pleasures of alcohol, and he never has more than two or three glasses of wine, but helps his friends with true Georgian hospitality to as much as they like and enjoys drinking with them.

His friends are without exception Caucasians, Georgians or Armenians. Like him, many of them were once pupils of the Theological Seminary, and all of them are experienced fighters on the Communist side. The number of these friends, whom he has appointed to responsible positions in the Government, has been sadly reduced by time. Only two or three survive; the rest were swept away by the Revolution. But even the dead deserve some mention here.

The oldest and most trusted of Stalin's friends, pupils, and

assistants was the illiterate Armenian Ter Petrosian, to whom Stalin gave the nickname of Kamo. Kamo was devoted heart and soul to his friend. He had a most extraordinary career. He took part in nearly all Stalin's Exes, and during his heroic existence was entrusted with the task of carrying out Stalin's most daring raids. He would lie in ambush for the enemy behind a rock, pounce on him, cut his throat, rob him of his money, and hand it over intact to Stalin. Then he would rest a day or two, drink wine, eat liberally of roast mutton, and turn up again with the question, "Where am I to go to now and how much money must I bring back?" He was quite incapable of performing any other services for the Party. Marxism was a closed book to him, and he was a mere child as far as any understanding of its precepts was concerned. But he was highly respected by all the mountain brigands in the Caucasus and not only Stalin, but also Lenin and Krassin, placed unlimited confidence in him. And truth to tell, he was eminently trustworthy. Never once did he leave Stalin in the lurch, and, if the words sympathy and love can be used at all in connexion with Stalin, we may say that he loved Kamo.

When Vorontsov-Dashkov's policy made Bolshevik activities impossible in the Caucasus and Stalin had been banished and the other leaders had fled, Kamo left the country, but not the Party. He went to Berlin, where his primitive mind suspected the existence of any number of rich people whose only protection was a mild and harmless police. The Party was in need of money again, and this time Kamo made up his mind to get it in Berlin in the old traditional way. The first rich man of whose existence Kamo learnt was a certain Mendelssohn, and he resolved to secure the wealth of this gentleman for the Party in the same way as he and Stalin had obtained the money belonging to the Russian State Bank in the old days. His plan was childishly simple and at the same time characteristically Caucasian. Armed with a few bombs he set out to lie in wait for the blood-sucker Mendelssohn when he was out for a walk. The

hurling of a few bombs would be bound to create the necessary panic. He would then shoot the banker Mendelssohn, rob him of his millions, and go quietly home again. Never for a moment did he imagine that a blood-sucker like Mendelssohn did not carry at least twelve millions in his pockets when he went out for a walk.

This brilliant plan, which would not have been quite so fantastic in Baku, turned out a failure, and the Berlin police did not prove nearly as harmless as Kamo had supposed. They somehow discovered his intentions, entered his lodgings at number 2 Elsässerstrasse, confiscated his bombs, and marched him off to prison. But his plot struck them as being so absurd that they were at a loss to know what to do with him. The matter reached the ears of Krassin, who was at that time a director of Siemens in Berlin, and he hastened to the assistance of his Party colleague. If the police did not know what to do with Kamo, the latter must on no account give them any help! Through a lawyer, K., with whom he was on friendly terms, Krassin told Kamo to pretend to be mad. This was not very difficult, for all he had to do was to behave in a Prussian prison as he would have behaved before a meeting of Socialists in the Caucasus, whereupon the police and the police surgeons unanimously declared him insane.

For four long years Kamo played the lunatic and then, as the result of representations on the part of the Russian Government, he was at last removed and taken to Tiflis, where at the command of the Viceroy he was put in chains and thrown into a cellar in the fortress of Mtekh. But his plight soon became widely known and aroused great indignation, more particularly among the aristocratic classes of the community. By secret and underhand methods the Bolsheviks contrived so to influence the Georgian princes that they publicly expressed their pity for poor Kamo. "True, Kamo is a brigand," society people would observe, "but he is also a Socialist and therefore a man who is fighting for his ideals and for the people. It is brutal to put him

in chains! Surely imprisonment would be enough!" And certain influential ladies left the Viceroy no peace until he gave orders for Kamo to be released from his chains. On that same day he escaped from the fortress of Mtekh, and made his way as quickly as possible via St. Petersburg, where Stalin was staying at the time, to Lenin, the supreme head of the Party, in Paris.

But he was not allowed to rest very long at the master's feet. Stalin soon required his services once more, and equipped with arms he returned to Tiflis, where fresh acts of plunder began to take place. One day on the great highway running between Tiflis and the fashionable holiday resort of Kadyori, Kamo held up a mail coach which was carrying a large sum of money. With the help of one or two associates, he stopped it, cut the throats of the seven passengers inside, and robbed them of their money. But this feat had an unfortunate ending for Kamo! Hardly had he secured the money, when a large detachment of Cossacks rode up. A hand-to-hand fight ensued, and only a few of Kamo's friends were able to make good their escape with the money. The others lay stretched out on the road. Kamo himself was seized, bound, and taken to Tiflis. Once more he was thrown into jail, but this time it was not by way of punishment for Socialistic activities and misdemeanours in Berlin. The court sentenced him to death for robbery. But the simple-minded, bestial, and illiterate bandit succeeded in making a certain impression on the court. Even the counsel for the crown considered it inadvisable to allow a man to be executed who in his brutal stupidity obviously did not understand the significance of his actions, and himself put in a plea for mercy, whereupon, in honour of the Tsar's Jubilee, Kamo's sentence was reduced to twenty years penal servitude.

The Revolution of 1917 set him free. He went to Stalin, who found suitable occupation for him, and became a prominent worker as executioner in the service of the Cheka. But when the White Guards were threatening the Soviet power, Kamo offered his services for secret work as a conspirator. One

day an opportunity occurred for visiting Tiflis, now a Communist city, and as he was walking truculently along Veri Street, he was run over and killed by a lorry. His great friend wept when he heard the news of his ignominious end and that same day the unfortunate driver of the lorry was executed in the cellars of the Cheka. The telegram conveying the death sentence bore the signature, "Stalin, General Secretary."

Besides Kam, who was Stalin's greatest friend, there were also two intellectual Caucasian Bolsheviks, the Armenian Stefan Shaumian and the Georgian Alexis Djaparidze. Stalin was deeply attached to both these men and was closely associated with them for many years as a revolutionary conspirator at the Baku oil wells. The better known of the two was Shaumian, the clever young leader of the Caucasian Bolsheviks. Compared with the other Caucasians he was a learned scholar. He had studied both in St. Petersburg and Berlin, had often met Lenin, and had taken no part in the Exes. He was extraordinarily popular among the workmen in Baku. In 1917, when Stalin hurried to St. Petersburg from his place of banishment, Shaumian, who had also been in exile, went to Baku, where he carried out a *coup d'état*, and by means of brutal massacres won the oil city for the Communists. Whereupon Stalin appointed him Commissar plenipotentiary for the whole of the Caucasus. He and twenty-six of his friends now inaugurated an unparalleled reign of terror in Baku. Thousands of people were executed and the Conservative Mohammedan population were specially picked out as victims. In spite of their Communist convictions, the Commissars and their assistants seized the opportunity to settle various private quarrels and race disputes, in which the hostility between Armenians and Mohammedans was the determining factor. Even those who had no leanings towards either Communism or Socialism joined the Commissars, in order, on the plea of supporting the cause of Communism, to settle old scores and blood feuds. Soon the whole country was in a state of uproar, but now and again Stalin in Moscow, which had long been cut

off from Baku, sent greetings to the first Soviet of the East.

This first proletarian Soviet in the East was overthrown by the workmen themselves. The Commissars, with the exception of one very young official of nineteen, were banished to Turkestan, where they were arrested by the Social-Revolutionary Government, mercilessly flogged, and led out into the desert and shot. "We shall not shrink from the most terrible tortures ever invented by man in order to punish the deeds of these people," wrote the *Voice of Central Asia*, the official Turkestan Government newspaper, in connexion with the arrest of the delinquents. "I am dying for Liberty!" cried Shaumian passionately as he was facing death in the desert. "We too will die for Liberty sooner or later," his executioners replied gloomily. "But by liberty we understand something different from you." In this heroic exchange of views the kernel of the Russian Revolution lies hid. And the executioners were not mistaken, for not one of them escaped Stalin's revenge.

"For some scores of years to come the Revolution in the East will have to pay for the deaths of these Commissars," wrote Stalin shortly after their execution. "They were the fine flower of Oriental Bolshevism!"

On this occasion Stalin did not weep, but he inflicted a most terrible revenge upon those responsible for the executions. Immediately after the final victory of Bolshevism in Asiatic Russia, the ghastly work of the Cheka began. A passing acquaintance with a friend of a relative of a man who had played some insignificant part in the Social-Revolutionary Government of Baku or Turkestan was sufficient for a person to be ruthlessly sacrificed to the memory of the twenty-six Commissars. Stalin himself directed this work of the Cheka from Moscow. When it had been carried out and thousands had been shot and the death of the twenty-six avenged, a barbaric statue of granite and marble was erected in the main square of Baku to their memory, at the unveiling of which Stalin made a sinister and bloodthirsty speech in honour of the fallen heroes. But he was

not yet satisfied. And even today, twelve years after the death of Shaumian, old charges are unearthed from dusty archives and people are condemned to death and shot in the cellars of the Cheka, while every year, on the nineteenth of September, Stalin celebrates the memory of the fallen in a speech or in one of his sombre essays.

There was only one Communist official whom the Social-Revolutionary Government of Baku did not send to Turkestan—Comrade Mikoyan, an extremely handsome Armenian and Stalin's youngest friend. When the workmen of Baku put an end to the bloody rule of the Commissars, Mikoyan remained true to Communism. Foaming at the mouth, he exhorted the workmen to remain true to the Government, and rushed through the prisons in which the Commissars were incarcerated. It was only his youth that saved him from sharing their fate. The son of extremely poor parents, he had been expelled from the Armenian Seminary of Tiflis. Afterwards, for some unaccountable reason, he was also expelled from the Russian Communist Party, and it was only with very great reluctance that the Armenian Communist Party took up his case. Then one day Stalin suddenly remembered the faithful youth and made him his secretary, and today Mikoyan is a powerful Minister of the U.S.S.R., Stalin's right hand and intimate friend. Stalin knew how to reward fidelity! At first Mikoyan had many enemies and the accusations brought against him by several leaders of the Party were, it must be admitted, of an extremely serious nature.

The first charge, and the one which the Party regarded as the most important, was that Mikoyan in his youth, before he had joined the Communists, had sympathetic leanings towards the bourgeois party of the Constitutional-Democrats. Exposures of this kind are of frequent occurrence in Soviet circles and have already wrecked many a great career. The second was a personal and less dangerous charge. It was said that as a lad Mikoyan had adopted a calling unworthy of a Minister in a Socialist state—that of a *softer*, or professional paramour among Caucasian

homosexuals—and that his health was suffering to this day from the effects of his youthful vices. When these two scandals connected with Mikoyan's name began to be talked about, Stalin summoned the Bolshevik leaders to him. "It is a matter of complete indifference to us," he said curtly, "whether Comrade Mikoyan has been a Constitutional-Democrat or a *göfter* or both. Today he is a revolutionary, and as such we must judge him." This unprecedented defence—for as a rule Stalin does not forget old shortcomings—worked miracles. The attacks immediately ceased, and Mikoyan proved himself worthy of the confidence reposed in him. Today he is a sick man, slowly wasting away, and sacrificing what strength remains to him in indefatigable work for Stalin's Government.

Among the few old Activists who still survive we must mention the Georgian Sergo Ordjonikidze, who, besides the elder Yenukidze, is perhaps the only man who can remember all the details of Stalin's career. He afterwards became President of the Central Control Commission of the Communist Party in Soviet Russia. The C.C.C. takes its orders direct from Stalin and really exercises the whole executive power in Russia. In the old days Ordjonikidze was an Activist and was for many years an inmate of Caucasian prisons and a political exile. In Siberia, where he was obliged to live in the Polar regions, he married an Eskimo woman whom he contrived to educate in the most masterly manner in Marxian lore. This marriage between a Georgian and an Eskimo turned out very happily, and, when he attained the pinnacle of power, he did not abandon his Polar love. He is a remarkable man for, although like Stalin and the rest of the Caucasian Bolsheviks his hands are red with the blood of his fellows, his native Georgian cheerfulness has never forsaken him, and apparently even the Arctic sensuality of his Eskimo wife has not been able to undermine it. He is fond of drink, loves a joke, and is usually regarded as a soft-hearted, almost sentimental man, which is all the more extraordinary, seeing that, when he was called upon to join the Cheka,

he was perfectly ready to do so and shot down real and alleged White Guards in exemplary fashion. But when in the midst of these activities he heard that a distant cousin of his had died of senile decay in a far-away Georgian village, this savage burst into tears and could not be consoled for hours. He had not seen the old man for years and, when asked why he was so fond of him, he replied: "Ah, he was such a good man!" And yet the people whom he was sending to their death that very day may not have been such terrible villains either! Nevertheless, everybody, even his intimates, praises his mildness and nobility, and Stalin clings to him with all the tenacity of a conspirator who feels he is becoming isolated. He and old Yenukidze are the only Activists who are still alive. For the younger generation, even in the Caucasus, has grown up in circumstances different from those with which the old Oriental conspirators, who were bound to each other in life and death, were familiar.

This completes the short list of Stalin's friends, but for a man like the present dictator of Russia it is an unusually large one. Only a few workers in the railway depots of Tiflis and in the oil fields of Baku still refer affectionately to Stalin as their friend; they are men who in the early days used to give him shelter when he was trying to hide, and, with unexpected tact, Stalin refers to these few old people as his teachers in the first principles of revolution.

Towards all his other Party comrades, even those who are most closely associated with him in his work and his most ardent supporters, Stalin maintains a purely official attitude. If they carry out a task successfully, he shakes hands with them and thanks them; if they fail, he upbraids them unmercifully before everybody, very often in the middle of a sitting of the Council of the People's Commissars, using the coarsest and most cynical gutter idiom of Moscow and Tiflis. Even towards Molotov and Kaganovich, the present pillars of Stalinism, his relationship is merely that of a man who has interests in common with them, interests which at any moment may become opposed. If he

thinks it necessary, he does not scruple to betray friends of this kind. Thus he betrayed both Zinoviev and Kameniev, both of whom honestly believed that they were his friends and felt the greatest indignation at his faithlessness.

Curiously enough there is not a single Russian among Stalin's friends whether alive or dead. Is this mere accident, or is the Georgian character of the present ruler of Russia too different from that of the Russian born? The latter is probably the true explanation. Stalin is and remains first and foremost a Georgian, and the Georgian, Caucasian, Asiatic spirit perhaps quite unconsciously plays a much greater part in his life than his official admirers imagine. Although his policy and emotional attitude towards national problems does not reveal the slightest sign of Georgian nationalism, as a private individual he remains essentially a Caucasian highlander, half Ossete, half Georgian, and a theological student. The cheery old Georgian Ordjonikidze, the seminarist and *göfter* Mikoyan, and the simple-minded bandit Kamo are ever so much more sympathetic, comprehensible, and akin to him than the intellectual lights of the Party whose wholehearted friendship at the present moment might be his for the asking.

AT THE OIL WELLS OF BAKU

FOR VARIOUS REASONS, BAKU, THE GREAT ASIATIC OIL CITY, BECAME the centre of the Communist conspirators. In the whole of Asiatic Russia, Baku was the only great city that possessed a large industrial proletariat, which, if only on account of the amazing conditions prevalent at the oil wells, was peculiarly accessible to radical propaganda.

With St. Petersburg and Moscow, this ancient and profoundly Oriental city on the shores of the Caspian Sea became a stronghold for Socialists of every category. The Communists were by no means always at the helm here, and the spirit of radical Marxism constantly fluctuated between two extremes in this Asiatic city, which was so important from the standpoint of the revolutionaries. It was not external circumstances—reprisals on the part of the oil magnates, or the reactionary policy of the Government—that in this case helped to put the Bolsheviks in the saddle, and they did not owe their success to the revolting brutality of the classes opposed to them. A revolutionary in Baku had to win his spurs, and it was in the workmen's dwellings in the suburbs, amid the oil towers and in the wretched employees' quarters that, after and during the hours of work at the pumps, the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks fought out their most bitter conflict for the souls of their listeners. As the supporters of both parties were chiefly Caucasians and Asiatics, this battle for the suffrages of the oil workers often assumed forms which had very little in common with the methods of a true democratic Parliamentary system. First the Bolsheviks, then the Mensheviks

would get the upper hand, and in the endless struggles between these two parties the revolutionary development of the proletariat was completed.

From the oil fields the revolutionary conspiracy spread in all directions. And these currents of influence did not always terminate either in the headquarters of the respective parties abroad, or in the information bureaux of the police. Between the miserable hovels in which the Communists always had to hide, and a magnificent palace in the heart of Baku, with a marble portico, a banqueting hall, and innumerable apartments, there was a connexion for which long and diligent search was made but which was never discovered. The noble inmate of this palace was neither an oil magnate nor a Government official, yet his power extended over the whole of Baku, including its oil wells and even the workmen's quarters hard by. He was the director of Baku's life stream, the electricity works, an engineer, and his name was Leonid Krassin.

The police frequently had their suspicions about this magnificent person. According to them he could not boast of an untarnished record, and there were various signs to show that he had not severed all connexion with his dubious past. Nevertheless no police officer ever dared to interfere with this distinguished and influential personage, and nobody suspected that it was the magnificent Krassin, who drove in such luxurious splendour through the streets of Baku, whom Communism had to thank for its era of greatest prosperity.

Next to Stalin and Sverdlov, Krassin was the most able conspirator in the Party. But whereas Stalin's power was revealed in the overt deed, in practical performance, Krassin was a past-master in the art of directing revolutionary effort in a secret, purposeful, circumspect, and dignified manner. In the years preceding the Revolution of 1905, Krassin founded and equipped in Baku an underground printing press, supplied with every possible technical appliance, the best revolutionary press in Russia.

The manager of the press was Yenukidze, later People's Commissar, who with a few associates spent three years in an underground lair and supplied the whole of Russia with revolutionary literature. This famous printing press was founded with astounding audacity. The possession of printing machines was attended with considerable risk, but on Krassin's advice they were conveyed so openly and ostentatiously through the streets that no police officer could have suspected that they were connected with anything illicit or contraband. When the printing works were in need of a large sum of money, and Krassin did not happen to be able to lay his hand on it, the Communists simply went to the Mayor of Baku, a worthy gentleman named Novikov, and demanded a loan of so many thousand roubles for revolutionary purposes. The Mayor, completely petrified, produced the sum. Whether he did so out of fear or stupidity is still a matter of debate between Stalin and Yenukidze. Stalin inclines to the view that it was stupidity.

This extraordinary press was chiefly employed to print Lenin's articles while he was living in exile abroad. The articles were photographed and reduced to such a minute size that they could be read only with the help of a magnifying glass. They were then smuggled into Russia. The publications of this press and above all *Iskra*, the famous party organ of the Bolsheviks, were conveyed by friendly railway workers via Derbent and Tiflis into Russia. In Tiflis, the distribution and forwarding of this revolutionary literature was one of the first duties which the Party set their young but tried member Stalin.

With Krassin's help, Baku ultimately became a stronghold of Communism. This was also to some extent due to the fact that the Government very foolishly chose Baku as a place of banishment for Marxists. The employees of the Electricity Works, the workmen and seafaring folk were already wholehearted Communists when the Revolution of 1905 made the secret printing works and further banishment unnecessary. The printing presses

were broken up, the Communists left the city, and even Krassin himself moved to Moscow. But the Mensheviks quickly regained the upper hand in the oil fields.

When in 1907 the post-revolutionary reaction set in, Baku had been cleared of Communists. But in order to prevent this important industrial centre from falling entirely into the hands of the Mensheviks, the Party decided to send Comrade Koba-Stalin there, for he was now a thoroughly experienced leader and had already made his first escape from Siberia. Thus Baku became Stalin's home for a number of years. Only for short spells at a time did he go with his Activists on star-touring expeditions, so to speak, visiting bourgeois and aristocratic Tiflis and other Caucasian towns to carry out his Exes. In Baku the obstacles in the way of Exes were almost insuperable. The oil magnates, who would have proved most lucrative victims, protected themselves by means of a well-trained bodyguard. So Stalin had to spend most of his time carrying on a bitter fight against the Mensheviks and conducting his propaganda.

On leaving the pretentious station of Baku, with its Moorish style of architecture, he found the town most inhospitable. The oil magnates still bore a grudge against the Bolsheviks; the Commissioner of Police was his old Tiflis friend, Colonel Martynov; and in the oil fields, which were to be his domain and refuge, his hated competitors the Mensheviks were undisputed masters. The whole Bolshevik organization had gone to bits, and Stalin had to hide not only from the police but also from the Mensheviks. In a dirty hotel in the suburbs, he reviewed the situation. The city seemed to him a hopeless proposition. Even with his Activists he could not do much there, for the native *Kochi* (chieftains) were at least his equals in strength. And in order to carry on an energetic campaign of propaganda, he decided to have recourse to intellectual means. He therefore summoned from Tiflis his two friends, the only semi-intellectuals among the Caucasian Bolsheviks, the Armenian Shaumian and the Georgian Djaparidze. Later on a fourth, Zuren Spandarian, the future

traitor, joined them. But these "intellectuals" rejected all the means whereby Stalin proposed to win power in Baku, such as thrashing the Mensheviks, terrorizing the police, extorting money from the oil magnates, and trying to get into touch with the Kochi, etc. His friends preferred the old traditions, and suggested the founding of printing works and the distribution of leaflets.

These intellectual measures did not commend themselves to Stalin in the least. What purpose would leaflets serve against the native Kochi? Nevertheless, such methods were at least calculated to make the cause of Bolshevism known to some extent, and that was the only purpose propaganda served. The question then arose as to where the manifesto drawn up by Shaumian should be printed. The friends left the solution of this complicated but entirely non-intellectual problem to Stalin. It was not an easy matter. The few secret presses in the city all belonged to the Mensheviks, and it was out of the question to hope that they would ever print a Bolshevik tract; while the owners of private presses were all on their guard, as the production of Communist leaflets might entail long terms of imprisonment. The only printing works whose owner would certainly go unscathed was the official press under the control of Colonel Martynov, the Commissioner of Police in Baku. Stalin cherished the warmest feelings for Martynov, who incidentally was quite a decent fellow. It was he who had been Chief of Police in Tiflis and had sent Stalin to his first term of exile in Siberia. And now the latter resolved to make life for the worthy Colonel as uncomfortable as possible, by resolving to have his leaflets printed in the Government printing works on Government paper. Heaven help the Colonel when he read the reprimands that would reach him from the Minister responsible!

How Stalin ever contrived to use the Police Commissioner's Government Press for the printing of Communist leaflets will probably remain a mystery to the end of time. He may have crept into the works by dead of night, bound the watchmen

hand and foot, and then worked the machines himself, for he understood printing. Or more probably he turned up at the works with a revolver in each hand and a dozen bombs slung to his belt, and ordered the men to print. Some of the Kochi of Baku, who hated him, afterwards spread the absurd rumour that he had called on Martynov and begged for his help in combating the Menshevik influence at the oil wells by placing the printing works at his disposal. But this was a fantastic fiction, for Stalin and Martynov were anything but good friends.

Be this as it may, one fine day the workmen's quarters, the oil fields, the offices of the oil magnates, and Government departments were drowned in a flood of Bolshevik leaflets. The Bolsheviks, who were almost forgotten, suddenly proclaimed their existence and, in a few brief sentences, announced their forthcoming conquest of the city. The event caused a great stir. "In addition to the ordinary Kochis, Baku is now going to have bands of ruffians who are Kochis on principle!" complained the Governor, General Fadeiev, that night. But it was among the Mensheviks that the consternation was greatest, for to them the reappearance of the Bolsheviks was a bolt from the blue. They eagerly compared the type of the leaflets with that of all the Baku printing works. And when it was discovered that they had been printed at the Government press, everyone immediately knew that there was only one man capable of such a feat, and that was Comrade Koba of Tiflis, who was already becoming a legendary figure. Incidentally, Comrade Koba had been very much disliked by the Mensheviks in Tiflis.

The Mensheviks were compelled to accept the Bolshevik challenge and the fight began. The relations between these sister Parties were at once extraordinary and humorous. While in Paris the Bolshevik Lenin and the Menshevik Dan were hotly discussing Liebknecht's last speech, or the Revision, and giving each other nasty dialectical knocks over a glass of beer in a café, similar disputes on the part of their almost illiterate followers in the far-away Caucasus were more often than not settled with

daggers and knives. After the debate in a Paris café, the leading revolutionaries would pay the bill, and in settling it a "class-war" man would very often come to the rescue of his opponent, the "unorganized revisionist." Meanwhile, their adherents in the uncouth region of the oil wells after a fresh row would be seized by the police and taken to prison, but as soon as they were inside the prison walls they would remember their common bonds as revolutionaries and present a united front to the warders. The subject of dispute, whether in a Paris café or on the Caucasian oil fields, was always the same—either Kautsky's latest speech or another article by Adler, the only difference being that, whereas the disputants in Paris knew the article by heart, in Baku they often only knew it by hearsay. But this did not prevent a ragged Transcaucasian Activist, armed to the teeth, from suddenly pouncing upon an equally ragged Dashnak, also armed to the teeth, and accosting him in appalling Russian with the question: "What do you think of Taylorism?"

Neither of them, of course, had the remotest notion of what Taylorism was, but they grappled with each other all the same in a class-conscious fight to the death as soon as the question was answered, and it was questions that had the least possible connexion with their everyday life which generally led to a scuffle. In this respect the leaders of the Caucasian revolutionaries did not differ much from their simple followers, though the priestly training of the majority of them (most of them hailed from theological seminaries) may have postponed the ultimate mêlée for a little while, and lent the discussion a certain pungent scholastic quality, in which the doctrines of the Church Fathers were often calmly confounded with the latter-day school of Lenin.

The appearance of Koba with his band of intellectual bandits was most unwelcome to the Mensheviks. The restless spirits among their own ranks were apt to desert and go over to the Bolsheviks where they scented the likelihood of promising raids. The relations between the two parties were strained to breaking-

point. The Mensheviks were more peaceful and less inclined for adventure than the dare-devil Bolsheviks, and they regarded Koba and his followers as the scum of the revolutionary world.

"We avoided Stalin more than we did the Tsar's police," a well-known leader of the Baku Mensheviks afterwards quite frankly admitted.

Truth to tell, in Baku, Stalin was a very difficult competitor to deal with. In his case it was impossible to tell where the Communist ended and the Transcaucasian Activist began. Any attempt at collaborating with him (and such attempts were actually made) always meant the risk of becoming involved in some criminal enterprise of which Stalin was of course always "quite innocent." To the leaders of the Mensheviks, who were really men of the lower middle class, chiefly concerned about the purity of their Marxist souls, the very idea that a Menshevik could participate in a criminal action was anathema.

Stalin was the antithesis of all this, being hardly conscious of any difference between criminal and political tactics, and defending his rough and ready principles of honesty behind the good of the Party. It was these principles that the Mensheviks decided to turn to account in their fight with Comrade Koba. They were, of course, well aware of who was responsible for the plundering of the Tiflis merchants, for the great Ex, and such things. But, true to the principle of solidarity with their misguided Bolshevik brethren, they avoided discussing these matters.

Now, however, that it was a question of gaining influence over the oil workers, it was decided to compromise Stalin. They therefore declared right and left that Comrade Koba, the leader of the Caucasian Bolsheviks, was no more than an Abrek, a Kochi, a robber chieftain, a disgrace to the name of revolutionary. But this only served to raise Stalin's prestige among the native workers of Baku, who regard an Abrek as essentially one of their own kith and kin, a trustworthy man; and, in retailing Koba's various deeds of heroism, the eyes of these simple Per-

sians and natives of Azerbaijan and Daghestan shone with pride and admiration. He was the kind of leader they needed, the kind of leader of whom they approved! Thus, contrary to expectation, the tales circulated by the Mensheviks merely served to secure Stalin unexpected popularity. Unfortunately, however, the matter did not depend on the good will of the unorganized, unclassed, and profoundly stupid native workers, but upon the hundred thousand skilled Russian workers in Baku, who were organized and extremely class-conscious. To them the Asiatic chieftain seemed a truculent upstart.

Without creating a fuss, or coming forward with any theoretical defence of the Exes, Stalin quietly determined to turn the tables on the enemy. The Social-Revolutionaries, too, were not altogether free of a certain predilection for Exes, and Stalin had no very great difficulty in finding intermediaries to persuade one or two of them to replenish their Party funds by means of a little extortion.

Hardly had the trumpery little Social-Revolutionary Ex been carried out, however, when Stalin took the offensive. He appeared at the meetings of the Russian workmen, and at the gatherings of the Mensheviks, and in loud and passionate tones condemned the base bandits, who were unable to separate the idea of robbery from the hallowed concept of Revolution. "How can one work in the same party with such robbers?" he cried, turning indignantly to face the assembled Mensheviks. On Stalin's lips the words were peculiarly significant. The Mensheviks were dumbfounded. Stalin as the defender of the bourgeois sense of honour! This was too much, and they felt the ground slipping from beneath their feet. Meanwhile Stalin waxed ever more passionate and indignant, and seemed to perspire from every pore with bourgeois virtue. The native workmen could not in any case understand his indignant tirade, which was delivered in Russian; but the skilled Russian workmen were horrified that a man who set such store by a clean conscience could be suspected of any criminal action. And thus, without denying

anything he had done, but merely by an exaggerated display of moral indignation, Stalin soon succeeded in redeeming the reputation of the Party even in the eyes of the Russians.

The fact that he was now more than ever despised by the Mensheviks and called an "impudent rascal" by a prominent Caucasian member of that Party, was, of course, a matter of the most complete indifference to him.

His activities at the oil wells soon bore fruit. In 1907, in association with Shaumian, the intellectual, he founded two illicit newspapers, *The Worker of Baku* and *The Proletarian of Baku*, and, together with Shaumian, he took over the editorship of these journals which had quickly become famous. At the same time he returned to his old habits of conspiracy. In the hovel in which the editorial offices of the newspapers were established, he felt at home. He left it to Shaumian to write the stimulating leading articles, while he constituted himself chief reporter of all the cases of exploitation in the Caucasus. On the outskirts of the city he received the few Caucasians who had access to him. There the ragged natives and suspicious characters of the mountain districts used to come to see him. As soon as they had given the correct password, the door of his primitive quarters was opened. The "editor-in-chief" addressed each man in his native tongue, listened to their confused reports, and gave his orders. And the next morning *The Worker of Baku* was better informed concerning the state of affairs in the country than the Commissioner of Police himself. Stalin seldom contributed to the paper in those days. Though since then the literati of Moscow have lauded his "exceptionally cultivated and critical judgment in literature," we may take it that at this time this faculty was not fully developed.

His essays provide the most glaring proof of his literary incapacity, which he never made any effort to conceal beneath a display of highfalutin' sentiment. He writes in the style of a blustering old colonel drafting orders for his regiment—in a scrupulously logical, unambiguous, and barbaric manner. With

the best will in the world, it is impossible to discover any attempt at style in his writings.

Comrade Koba's activities did not, of course, escape the vigilant eye of Colonel Martynov. In Balakhan, a little oil village near Baku, where Stalin was living, the workers were, from the revolutionary standpoint, quite unschooled. Some small imprudence, a word carelessly dropped, an inadvertent glance, aroused the attention of the police. Stalin's refuge became known to the Colonel, and as early as 1908 he was arrested. He faced the Colonel with perfect composure and denied everything, even his identity. What was he doing?—He was living in Baku.—Why?—Because the air of the oil fields suited him.

Once more the Colonel was unable to commit him for trial. But the authorities knew that Koba, who refused to give any name to the police, was not a welcome visitor to the oil city. So to be on the safe side, they locked him up, and for similar reasons secured an administrative decree, and banished him to Vologda in the north. Stalin heard the decree quite calmly. When he reached Vologda, he spent the night quietly in a hut, got up as fresh as a sparrow in the morning, and, without further ado, left his inhospitable place of exile. His flight was successful, and a few months later he was once more installed in a hiding-place in Baku, though this time he took care that it was even less accessible.

He now resumed his work of publishing his illicit newspapers and struggling with the infidel Mensheviks, though he was careful to keep his return a profound secret. Experience had given him perfect mastery in the tactics of conspiracy, and he knew that, as a mysterious shadow lurking behind the scenes, he could produce the best results. "In Tiflis I was a revolutionary infant in arms," he declared in one of his recent speeches, "and it was only in Baku that I became an apprentice in the methods of World Revolution."

This modest confession contains a grain of truth. The daredevil of Tiflis became in Baku a wary, cautious, clear-headed,

cold-blooded, and deliberate conspirator. He devoted the best years of his life to his work in Baku, and there developed the qualities which are his to this day. Craft, cunning methods, and cynicism towards everybody including himself had become his chief and ultimate characteristics and defined the harsh traits of his nature by the time he found himself obliged to spend his life in the queerest hiding-places, surrounded by traitors and enemies. He scarcely ever came out into the open, and even the members of his own Party hardly knew what he looked like. He was content to leave all the laurels to his friends Shaumian and Djaparidze, while he himself, the real director of the revolutionary work, preferred to remain stubbornly in the background. At that time he was the only fully qualified professional revolutionary in the Caucasus, the only active organizer and expert of outstanding ability.

Gradually his professional work, and his absorption in its daily routine, began to occupy the foremost place in his mind, while the ultimate object of it all, the idea that animated him, and which after all provided the *raison d'être* of the whole business, gradually became of secondary importance, as it did with so many of the professional revolutionaries. The people became more and more of an abstraction in his mind, a lay figure on which the professional could test his powers and on which he felt justified in making the most daring experiments. Just as a general may take pride in bloody battles, so did the professional revolutionary take a pride in his calling. In Stalin, at all events, this pride was very strong, and gradually became the determining factor in forming his decisions and prompting his actions. Moreover, if we may keep to the metaphor, Stalin, like the soldier who has never been defeated, was extremely proud of the fact that nobody had ever been able to commit him for trial. The terrorist, who had been hunted down like a wild beast, now ceased to expose himself; for he had pliant instruments in men who clung to him unquestioningly, and automatically obeyed his slightest command.

The sense of security thus engendered, together with the practical immunity he had enjoyed in spite of his ceaseless activities in the cause of revolution, filled him with greater pride and self-confidence than all the doctrines of Marx, and he fearlessly thought out every step he took, and worked only by indirect means. Craft and cunning were now his principal weapons. He hardly ever appeared before a crowd, for he was only too well aware that his ugly pockmarked face made a very bad impression on the masses.

He also knew that he did not possess the gift of persuasion and, free as he was of all personal vanity, he made up his mind not to appear at any meetings. It was only when some vital issue was at stake, when the Mensheviks seemed to be on the point of winning over part of the oil fields, or when the workmen showed signs of weakness, that Stalin left his hiding-place, and quick as lightning put in his spoke. If his friends thought there was any chance of his turning up, they would increase their activities. But even they never knew precisely when and where he would emerge, and whenever he did so the most brutal conflicts, the most heated debates and surprising victories for his Party were sure to follow.

Stalin always directed operations with the greatest success and with complete assurance. His little eyes gleamed malevolently, his fists were clenched, and his breath came deep and fast. Often he would rush across the hall to knock an opponent down with his heavy fist, shout a few telling and cynical remarks at the crowd, and then disappear in a flash. From time to time, if he happened to hear that in some other part of the Caucasus, in Batum, Chiatury, or elsewhere, Communism was showing signs of weakness, or the Party coffers required his help, he would vanish from Baku for a while, with his Activists. Nobody knew where he had gone, and it was only when news of a fresh Ex on a grand scale, or of another defeat of the wretched Mensheviks, reached them, that his friends guessed who was responsible.

But if anyone asked him where he was going, he would

smile coldly and merely inform even his most intimate friends that he was "off to do a star turn." And the fact that he had been successful in his undertaking could be gathered only by his exceptional gloom on his return. He also dealt with all matters connected with Party discipline and Party courts from his hiding-place. To traitors he was merciless, and it will never be known how many Laodicean Bolsheviks found their last resting-place in the bed of the Caspian Sea at that time. But he always managed to keep in the background. Anyone suspected of treachery was immediately done away with, not by Stalin and his Activists; but the unsuspecting offender was for some reason or other pounced upon by Kochis or even by Mensheviks, who, without being aware of it, were fulfilling Stalin's orders.

Only once was the conspirator Koba able to offer energetic intervention on behalf of "the people" who, after all, it was his sole duty to serve. This was when he organized the great general strike of the oil workers, and a Senatorial Commission hurried south from St. Petersburg and discovered to their horror that only in the remotest wilds of India did the workers live in such appalling conditions as they did in the Baku oil fields. It was then that Stalin uttered the slogan: "Collective bargaining between workers and owners!" He already had a large following among the workers of Baku and, by the obscure avenues possible only in Asia, had also established connexions with the real lords of the city, the oil magnates. When, for instance, Shaumian was arrested, Stalin managed to compel Shibaiev, the great oil magnate, to obtain his release from the Governor General.

Stalin turned to account all the influence he exercised over the contending parties, the workers and the oil magnates, in order to promote his schemes for collective bargaining. He presented himself before the oil magnates as the representative of Labour, and the sinister look in his Georgian eyes achieved what strikes and demonstrations had failed in accomplishing. At last the scheme was sanctioned without the oil magnates being really

aware who it was to whom they had been forced to give way, and in high glee Stalin returned to his daily routine.

But this did not last very long. In spite of his genius for conspiracy and his painstaking caution, he soon fell into the enemy's clutches and did not manage to escape for some considerable time. On the occasion of a bloody riot near the harbour, he was at last seized by the police, arrested, and once more placed under lock and key. This led to his first long term of imprisonment.

The old Russian revolutionaries used often to declare that a man revealed his true character only in prison, and indeed for generations the Tsarist jails provided the Socialists with their only test of activity. Stalin had long ago earned the prison hallmark of the revolutionary with brilliant success, but it was in the prison of Baku that for the first time he was, as it were, to live in peace among fellow-creatures many of whom were not Bolsheviks. For the first time he was in a position to be observed by others more or less as a private individual living in normal circumstances. And in the next few pages we shall see the strange picture of Stalin the prisoner, of Stalin on leave, so to speak, as he appears in the reminiscences of his fellow-prisoners.

THE PRISON IN BAKU

IN THE OIL CITY OF BAKU ON THE CASPIAN SEA, IN THE SUBURB OF Bailov, there stands a long two-storied building with iron-barred windows. It is surrounded by oil towers and factories, and is built on a stretch of waste land soaked in oil and filth. It is the prison of the city and was designed to accommodate four hundred inmates. In the year 1909, fifteen hundred political and criminal convicts were crowded together under its roof. The Stolypin reaction was at its height, and political prisoners were being brought in to the jail from every part of Transcaucasia, from Turkestan, from the land of the Uzbeks, the Tadjiks, and the Sarts, and afterwards deported to Siberia, Sakhalin, the Polar tundras and other pleasant places. The prison cells were full to overflowing. Prisoners were lying in the passages and corridors and even on the staircases inside the prison building, and there was the usual difficulty in separating political from criminal offenders and preventing simple men, indicted for robbery with violence and other harmless crimes, from being inoculated with the virus of Socialism. Every day it became more difficult for the Governor of the prison to distinguish between the political prisoner and the ordinary pickpocket, for both were frequently charged with the same crime, and how was it possible to make sure whether it had been prompted by political conviction or by private cupidity? This could be satisfactorily settled only by the political prisoners themselves, and so the authorities left it to them to choose their associates from the crowd of incoming convicts.

Every prisoner who on entering claimed to be a "political" and wished to be treated accordingly, was obliged to substantiate his claim before a special commission consisting of political prisoners. The prison authorities did not dare, on their own initiative, to place a prisoner in the political section, for the political prisoners would unmercifully thrash and eject unwelcome additions to their ranks. They insisted on being allowed to keep to themselves. The special reception commission was organized on strictly parliamentary lines, which, in the absence of a Russian State Constitution, was the only way in which political prisoners could give expression to their democratic leanings. Mensheviks, Bolsheviks, Anarchists, Social-Revolutionaries of the Left and Right, Democrats, National Democrats, and so on sat cheek by jowl in the prison, held political debates, disputed acrimoniously with one another, and elected their representatives for the various commissions in strict parliamentary fashion by means of a secret or open vote. There were commissions for controlling the cleaning of the latrines, for the commissariat, for the reception of political prisoners, and similar duties. The commissioners elected the ministers, that is to say the cook and the head of the state in this republic of political convicts. In the year 1909 the latter post in the prison of Bailov was filled by the Armenian, Vagon Manakhorian.

One day a mysterious native was brought into the prison. Even the crimes with which he was charged were vague and ill defined. Though suspected of every crime under the sun, nothing could be proved against him, but it had been thought best to keep him for a while under lock and key.

The description of this new prisoner is still in existence. He was a tall man with a pointed nose and a pockmarked face. He wore a blue sateen shirt without a collar and had a belt round his waist. Over his shoulders was thrown a Caucasian cloth *bashlik*. He looked drawn and emaciated, walked as softly as a cat, and all his movements were extraordinarily deliberate. He refused to give any name but insisted upon being placed in the

political section. Before the commission had decided whether to accept him or not, he went into one of the political cells and was given a hearty, almost reverent welcome by the Bolshevik faction among the inmates. The members of the commission who were punctiliously concerned about their rights, especially the Mensheviks, immediately raised an objection. "Who is this newcomer?" they demanded. The Bolsheviks at first refused to reply, but vouched for the political credentials of their comrade, and ultimately in strict confidence revealed only to the pedantic Mensheviks the name by which he was known in the Party—Comrade Koba.

Koba-Stalin was no stranger to prison life. Banishment, flight, and imprisonment had already become familiar stages in his career. As soon as he entered Bailov he was at home in his new environment. On the score that he had been condemned to serve a long sentence, he demanded on the very day after his arrival a double portion of meat from the Social-Democratic cook, and resumed the discussion he had broken off in the last prison with fellow-convicts whose views differed from his own.

Prison was the only place where the politicians could unburden their minds without let or hindrance.

At that time Koba was animated less by hostility to the common foe, the Tsarist police, than by detestation of the great rival party to the Bolsheviks—the Mensheviks, who were so successful in the Caucasus. "Anybody who argues like a Menshevik, or interprets Marx differently from Lenin and the Central Committee of the Communist Party, is a rascal and a blackguard!" was the invariable phrase with which Stalin would interrupt any discussion with Mensheviks, the moment they made any allusion to the dangerous subject of Revisionism. Into the depths of Revisionism he never dared to venture; he was perfectly satisfied with Lenin's exposition. And his orthodox Marxism placed him very high in the estimation of his fellow-Bolsheviks, who regarded him as the Caucasian Lenin and the best Oriental authority on Marx. Compared with that of the other Caucasian

revolutionaries, his knowledge of Marx, though purely mechanical, was truly enormous. In debate he could without the least effort reel off whole pages of Marx and Lenin from memory like an automaton, refusing to offer any explanation of their doctrines and never attempting to do so. Explanation was never his strong point.

He never took part in the ordinary gossip of the prison, whether it turned on politics or on matters of general interest. Mere empty chatter did not appeal to him. If an ordinary Menshevik or Social-Revolutionary suddenly put some foolish question to him, such as: "What do you think of the agrarian question in Spain, Comrade?" he would shout a few sentences at him in Georgian and suggest that, if the honoured comrade really meant the question seriously, a proper debate should be held on the subject. Circumstances in Bailov favoured public debates. As it was overcrowded, the prisoners were not locked up in separate cells but were allowed to wander freely about the building. Thus political meetings which were strictly forbidden everywhere else were left undisturbed there; for after all the inmates were already undergoing the punishment for such meetings, which was imprisonment. It may seem strange that prison should be the only place where a revolutionary novice could, without let or hindrance, receive a thorough theoretical training. Intercourse with the old members of the various parties and the incessant debates and arguments turned anyone who spent even a year in this revolutionary academy into a fully qualified subverter of society.

Stalin was a master of organized debate. He very rarely spoke himself, and, although his speeches with their apt quotations from Marx filled his followers with admiration, they were monotonous and wearisome. But this did not prevent him from showing consummate skill in conducting a meeting and, as circumstances demanded, either ending the debate with a wild hand-to-hand fight or with stirring cheers.

The debate he organized on the agrarian question has be-

come famous. All the parties in the prison, including the Anarchists, were represented, but the tone was set by the Social-Revolutionaries, who made the greatest display of learning. This displeased Stalin very much, and he made a sign. Whereupon his friend Sergo Ordjonikidze stood up and calmly went up to the triumphant orator, Iliko Kartsevadze, who had just skilfully defended the first principles of the Social-Revolutionary Party, and struck him a blow in the jaw. With blood streaming from his face the unfortunate theorist sank to the floor. The debate broke up, and, to the indignant protests that were raised, Stalin retorted quietly: "Against enemies of the Party everything is allowable!" On the following day the faithful Ordjonikidze was pounced upon in one of the dark passages of the prison by the Social-Revolutionaries and almost beaten to death.

But, as we have seen, Stalin knew how to reward any member of his Party who had proved his devotion and undergone physical suffering for the Cause; Sergo Ordjonikidze is today one of the most powerful men in Russia.

Prison life creates a strange feeling of fellowship between the inmates of the institution. In the unbroken monotony of their lives, the men are involuntarily drawn to one another, particularly in a prison like Bailov where the convicts were not separated by bolts and bars. But even here Stalin proved an exception. He held aloof from all the politicals, even the Bolsheviks, and adopted towards everyone an attitude of stiff reserve. Rarely honouring anyone with more than a few brief words, he generally ended the conversation with some sarcastic remark which he was never at a loss to find, and it was only the respect he enjoyed among the Bolsheviks and his legendary past which compelled the other politicians to overlook his extraordinary behaviour. He would lie day after day without stirring in some dirty corner on a plank bed or on straw, reading Lenin or Marx, whose books he always carried about with him. Even at night he would not part with them, but used them as pillows. If ever he did put them aside, it was usually to bury his head in some text-

book on Esperanto; for, contrary to the view he holds today and prompted by his Marxian sympathies, he believed at that time in an international language of the future. He therefore scorned all other European tongues which he regarded as fleeting phenomena in a capitalistic age. To this day, except for Russian, he can speak only his native Oriental languages, Georgian, Ossetian, and the like. He avoided associating with his political fellow-prisoners as much as possible, and he was probably induced to go to the political section only on account of the comparatively better treatment meted out there. But he loved to mix with the criminal convicts, who, unorganized as they were and lacking all parliamentary representation, crowded the other half of the prison.

It is difficult to say what his reasons were, but nearly every day he would disappear into the cells of the ordinary Caucasian robbers, murderers, burglars, and *souteneurs*. Apparently he was impressed by these men of action, for he regarded even politics as merely providing a further opportunity for a life of deeds. He enjoyed a great reputation among the riff-raff. The criminal convicts who, as a rule, could not make head or tail of what the politicians were driving at, regarded Stalin, who understood their language and spoke it to them, as one of themselves, and he, for his part, felt quite at home in their company. He could talk to them for hours, exchanging mutual confidences about their experiences in various parts of the Caucasus. He would describe the details of his own heroic feats, while the bandits listened open-mouthed. Then they would tell him of their mighty deeds of plunder, of the children they had kidnapped from oil magnates, and of all kinds of robberies and murders they had perpetrated in Asia. Stalin listened enthralled. He grew eloquent and confidential; he felt in his element! His comrades with some justice nicknamed him the Kochi of Bailov Prison. Kochi means a robber chief, and "chieftain of the prison bandits" therefore became Stalin's title, which he bore with the utmost dignity.

"In a respectable country Stalin would not even be allowed inside a jail!" a Communist leader jokingly remarked a few years later. And there is an element of truth in this cynical assertion. Stalin was a superb specimen of jail-bird. The year 1909 was a tragic one for the prison. The White Terror was raging and horrible things took place in the overcrowded cells and corridors. The whole building groaned. Many of the prisoners became unhinged in their minds while some went raving mad, and from time to time there would be outbreaks of mass hysteria. The cells resounded with maniacal howls and shrieks, and now and again some man would be wrenched from a body of loafing prisoners who were his friends, hurried into the prison courtyard, and there executed as the result of some mysterious order that had been received. And then dead silence reigned within the prison walls, broken only by occasional hysterical cries.

Stalin alone paid no heed to the general mood. When gallows were erected in the prison, and men with whom only a few hours previously he had been arguing were ruthlessly led away by savage and brutalized executioners, while the whole prison listened breathlessly to what was happening, he would be sleeping peacefully with his head resting on some publication by Lenin. Nothing disturbed his slumbers; nothing apparently could destroy his equanimity. The eternal monotony of the prison turned the men into savages, and they devised brutal games, pranks, and amusements to while away the time. One of the favourite pastimes was what was known as "making people boil over." It was played as follows: some of the prisoners would pick out one of their companions and proceed to tease and irritate him unmercifully in every possible way, exposing him to a process of nervous torture lasting for hours, days, and even weeks, until they sent him almost mad. This proceeding succeeded with all on whom it was tried except Stalin. Nobody ever succeeded in making him "boil over." Nor did he ever try to play the trick on anybody else though he was admirably equipped for doing

so, for, according to accounts in Party circles, he afterwards displayed the most masterly skill in making Trotsky "boil over."

Even in prison Stalin retained his well-known capacity for brutally playing people off against each other without ever coming into the open himself. One day, for instance, a terrible scene was suddenly enacted in the prison. A young Georgian was pounced upon and beaten to death. Seized by mass-fury, the whole prison had fallen upon the unfortunate young man, and all that remained on the floor of the corridor was a bleeding mass of flesh. Stalin alone took no part in the general scrimmage. Sitting quietly in a corner, he went on reading Lenin. It was subsequently said that the Georgian had been an *agent provocateur*, but this sounds unlikely. Any inmates of the prison who were suspected of being *agents provocateurs* were tried by a special commission of prisoners and quietly strangled before the authorities could intervene. Only much later was it discovered that the initiative for the lynching of the young Georgian had come from Stalin himself, who had apparently sat quite unconcerned in a corner while the tragedy was taking place.

On another occasion a young workman was brought into the prison. Hardly had he crossed the threshold when one of the political prisoners named Mityka Grek made a dash at him and plunged a knife between his ribs. On being brought up for examination, Mityka gave the most confused replies and ultimately declared that the new prisoner had been a spy whose name he had forgotten. Stalin was particularly indignant at the affair and could hardly find words strong enough to condemn this lack of discipline on the part of Mityka, who was a member of the Menshevik Party. And it was only when Stalin was well out of reach that it was learnt that he had known all about the matter. The young workman was an old enemy of his, and he had all but put the knife for the deed into Mityka's hands!

In spite of these extraordinary happenings and the peculiar position Stalin created for himself in the prison, he was not by

any means disliked by his fellow-sufferers. Prison life developed a strange relationship among the political prisoners. At any moment one of them might be led to the gallows, or be forced to flee, and everyone depended on the help of his neighbour. This led to a strong sense of fellowship and *esprit de corps*, which stamped a man as a good comrade, a genuine revolutionary, prepared for anything, who would rather risk his life than leave his neighbour in the lurch. In this sense Stalin was a good friend. Whenever the prisoners had some grievance against the authorities, and angrily had recourse to reprisals, breaking the crockery or beating with their fists at the iron bars of their windows, and howling at the top of their voices as a form of protest, Stalin was always to the fore. True, he never took the lead in organizing such demonstrations, but he always regarded it as his duty to play a conspicuous part in any riot when once it was started. As a matter of fact, however, he had no very high opinion of open obstructive methods within prison walls, and never gave the initiative for disturbances of this sort. But when inexperienced young hot-heads among the prisoners were planning some wild prank of the kind, insisting on violent measures and addressing unreasonable demands to the prison authorities, he never supported any attempt to avoid trouble made by the seasoned old members of the Party, of whom he was regarded as one, but would stand sullenly apart and wait for the disturbance to begin without wasting breath in trying to prevent it. If others succeeded in averting the conflict, he would retire silently into his corner. But if the unorganized protest took place, while the more experienced prisoners slunk away, Stalin would immediately come forward, shouting at the top of his voice, beating the gratings with his fists, and shrinking from no danger, not even the bayonets of the soldiers, and thus defended an obviously hopeless cause in the success of which he did not for one moment believe. If he was asked for his advice whether or not a protest should be raised, he returned evasive replies, for, as we have already mentioned, however vexatious the behaviour of the au-

thorities might be, nothing would induce him to propose retaliation of his own accord.

On the other hand he eagerly played an active part in any adventure on a grand scale. The political section of the prison managed to keep in constant secret communication with the outside world, and, as soon as the inmates heard that one of their number had been condemned to death, they did all in their power to help him to escape at the earliest possible moment. These were extremely dangerous undertakings which Stalin together with a few carefully selected colleagues took upon himself. He was an adept in this particular department. Did he not himself manage to escape from Siberia five times?

This spirit of comradeship once led to an unpleasant sequel. Suddenly while an organized protest was in progress, during which the prisoners had gone beyond all bounds, the Chief of Police himself, bloated and reeking as usual of alcohol, and accompanied by an armed guard, appeared in the corridor of the political section. He marched smartly down the passage and putting his head into the noisiest cells, roared, "Silence, or we shall shoot!" On most of the inmates, who knew what a determined man he was, the effect was instantaneous. There were a few perfunctory and half-hearted cries of "Out with the hangman!" and then the whole disturbance fizzled out. Only a few inexperienced young Communists supported by Stalin continued their protests, and the Governor of the prison entered the cell in which the Georgian was raving like a lunatic. What happened has not been made generally public. It seems that the brief but scurrilous exchange of compliments between Stalin and the Governor was ended by the former seizing the latrine pail with which every cell was supplied, and emptying its contents on the Governor's head. Such an outrage had never been known before, even in the prison of Baku!

Every political cell was immediately locked and the prison authorities withdrew for a consultation. Dead silence reigned throughout the building, and everybody wondered what was

going to happen next. Stalin, the man chiefly concerned, was the only one who lay quite unperturbed in his cell eagerly reading a new essay by Lenin which had just been smuggled in. At last the verdict of the authorities was made known. On the first day of the Easter celebrations, when as a rule the prisoners were treated with special consideration and kindness, Stalin and a number of his comrades were to be forced to run the gauntlet through a detachment of soldiers. This was the most ghastly form of torture which could be devised for political prisoners. It was many a long year since it had been inflicted on convicts of this category; for this occasion it had to be unearthed from the grisly past of prison history.

When the day arrived, the first company of the Zalyan Regiment, then stationed in Baku, led by Colonel L., marched to the beat of drums into the courtyard of the prison. The culprits were stripped and the other prisoners were marshalled in the courtyard to watch the proceedings and take warning by them. One after the other the delinquents were driven through the ranks of soldiers. Stalin came last; he had calmly witnessed the castigation of his friends without turning a hair. Not all had been able to get through the ranks; many had sunk faint and bleeding to the ground before reaching the end.

Stalin looked on quite indifferently, holding in his hand a book of essays by Lenin. Now and again he would open it and read a few lines. He seemed to be learning it by heart. At last his turn came. "Now hit harder than ever!" roared the Colonel. Slowly and thoughtfully Stalin approached the long ranks of soldiers, calmly opened his book, turned over a page and became absorbed in the words of his far-away leader, as he advanced between the lines of his tormentors. This insolent contempt infuriated even the soldiers themselves, and they brought down their sticks with brutal violence on his naked body, striking more and more savagely as they found he advanced with unruffled serenity. Blood poured from the open wounds, but not a muscle of his face twitched. He strolled so slowly between the

ranks that he might have been a scholar pacing his study lost in thought. Not once did his eyes leave the book he held before him and after the ordeal he returned calm and sombre to his cell, washed his wounds, and lay down on his hard plank bed in the corner as if nothing had happened. For weeks he was unable to lie on his back, but this did not prevent him from taking an active part in the next organized protests. He was a revolutionary automaton, a man of iron nerve. Even Colonel L., who had seen many horrors in his day, was honestly staggered and never forgot the incident connected with this strange man.

Stalin ultimately avenged himself on the Colonel. He was never able to lay hands on him personally, for he fled and is living abroad to this day; but on Stalin's orders L.'s brother and all the other members of his family were forced to end their lives in the cellars of the Cheka in Baku, in General Tagiyev's house in the old Police Street. This happened in 1919, when Stalin marched in triumph through the streets of the oil city and the bodies of his enemies, with weights attached to their feet, were flung into the gloomy oil-covered waters of the Caspian Sea. Stalin is terrible in revenge. He never forgot the day when he ran the gauntlet. But the gloomy convict Koba gradually got on the nerves of the prison authorities themselves, and they were extremely relieved to be rid of him. Shortly afterwards he was condemned to a long term of exile in Siberia in the hope that, as a southerner exposed to the ice and snow of the Polar regions, he would at last learn respect for authority.

STALIN THE CAUCASIAN

STALIN WAS THIRTY WHEN HIS CAREER IN THE CAUCASUS CAME TO an end. There were two factors which made it impossible for him to work any longer in his native mountains. The first was external pressure: banishment, imprisonment, and the attention the Caucasian police paid him. For although they could prove nothing against him, they wished nevertheless to be rid of him.

The second factor, though more interesting, is never mentioned in any official biographies of the dictator. Shortly before he was sent to Bailov Prison, Stalin was expelled from the revolutionary parties of the Caucasus and therefore officially declared to be of no use in the cause of revolution.

This dark chapter in his career requires some explanation. The Caucasian revolutionaries, the Mensheviks, the Social-Revolutionaries, the Bolsheviks, and the rest, in spite of constant disputes among themselves, had decided, for the purpose of better organization, to unite in forming a supreme Transcaucasian Committee. This Committee, on which Stalin, too, had for some time played a not unimportant part, was chiefly Menshevik, and among other things insisted upon a high moral standard among its members. Now Stalin's peculiar and special activities could not, of course, escape their vigilant eyes for long. He became a thorn in the side. Though they refrained from any exaggerated expression of disapproval and from condemning every form of "expropriation of private property" root and branch, they could not suffer the excesses of Stalin and his men gladly. Nothing was known for certain, but the rumours that reached their ears

served to rouse their ire. Moreover, Stalin was taking less and less interest in purely Caucasian problems and, as a consistent Internationalist influenced by the Lenin school, he refused any longer to lend a sympathetic ear to Nationalist demands. His subsequent stern rejection of Georgian separatist claims of whatever category which, as is well known, led to his ultimate breach with Lenin, was already foreshadowed at this time.

But the Caucasian Committee was made up of men who in 1917 became the leaders of the Georgian Nationalist movement, and they refused to tolerate the internationalistic Stalin and his Exes among them any longer. They accordingly passed a resolution in the Transcaucasian Committee by an overwhelming majority to exclude Stalin from the Social-Democratic Labour Party of Russia. This resolution could not, of course, shake his position within the Bolshevik faction, whose recognized leader he was, but it made it difficult for him to continue his general activities. He accordingly soon turned his back on the Caucasus and sought a fresh outlet for his energy in other parts of Russia which had not been tainted by Philistinism and which suited him better.

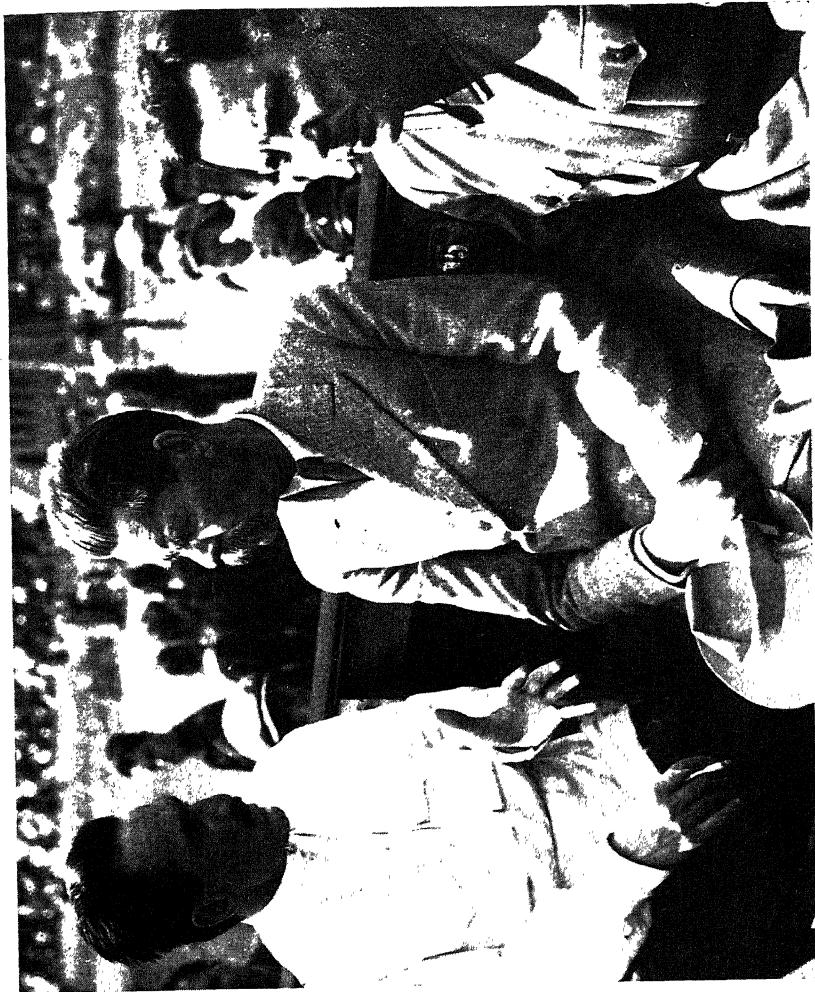
At the age of thirty Stalin was fully developed, his soul was set in a definite mould, and his nature irrevocably fixed on a solid and enduring base. After that he never changed. He was a Caucasian to the core. It was in the Caucasus that the man Stalin reached maturity, and it is the Caucasus, that strange mountain land, which determines his being today. He is the Caucasian *par excellence*, a creature apart, neither Asiatic nor European, a rock of primeval granite in which the simplest elements have combined to produce a structure of heroic cast.

In all his actions, in his every emotion and gesture, the peculiar and typical sense of honour of the Caucasian may be found. Behind the walls of the Kremlin there sits today a gloomy and taciturn man who speaks Russian badly. He rules an Empire of one hundred and sixty millions, upon whom, as well as upon the rest of the world, he is making it his aim to impose the

atmosphere of the Caucasian mountains, gorges, and citadels. He is imbued with that primitive and touching Caucasian sense of justice, which is taken for granted by the highland warrior, and which stands out in sharp contrast to all the usages and traditions of the complicated world of politics and intrigue. The moral code of the mountain knight is grand and simple: to kill an enemy is good, but to kill ten is better, and he who understands vengeance and can kill a hundred enemies, has every right to be immortalized in song as a great hero. But it is wicked, extremely wicked, to take money out of one's enemy's pocket, to betray him, or to do away with him when he pleads for peace. He who would overcome his enemies has no need to kill them. He need not move a finger. All he need do is to spin a delicate web; his enemies will then fight each other. He will look on and rejoice in his own wisdom, while in their mutual hatred his enemies cut each other to pieces.

This is the immemorial East, pure and unadulterated. For ages the West has tried in vain to imitate it. Sublime cunning, unrestrained brutality, the profound conviction of being right, are all qualities to which even the simple, careless, and somewhat indolent Caucasian highlander can aspire. Stalin is the very embodiment of this Oriental attitude. To him the rest of the world is an object on which to practise his abstract theories in the realm of justice and cunning; for to him the whole world consists of enemies, of natural enemies whom, therefore, he is naturally compelled to fight and to exterminate. This is right, aristocratic and above reproach.

Now, to the Oriental, the man who does not live under his roof is an enemy. He divides mankind into two categories—those who are related to him by blood, whom he must stand by, and who, at least symbolically, live under his roof, and those who are not related to him by blood, and against whom everything is right and permissible. In the Caucasus all those who are blood relations, or if not actually blood relations, attach themselves to a man and place themselves under his protection, con-



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MIKOYAN, GORKI, VOROSHILOV

stitute a social unit, a clan, a sort of nation. From Stalin's stand-point, the group of the Marxist Bolsheviks lived metaphorically under his roof. Whether he wished it or not, whether they deserved it or not, he was forced to stand by them, for round this law the whole morality of the mountains centres. Now, beneath the roof of a Caucasian patriarch, the first essential is obedience. He may sell his children into slavery, he may force them to do anything he wishes, to rob, to murder, or even to do something honourable—none of these things is considered immoral. He alone is responsible for the general well-being of the clan, of the social unit. The genuine Caucasian does not recognize any other form of society, and for this reason alone it was no accident that the despotically organized Bolshevik Party, with its primitive discipline and justice, should have become the ideal of the genuine primitive Caucasian, Stalin.

Anything outside a man's own roof, outside the gorge in which his people live, is incomprehensible, hostile, and damnable. Unsuspected dangers lurk in the neighbouring gorge, whence enemies emerge whom it is waste of time to recognize or define. They must be annihilated before they can annihilate. In so far as he is not under the protection of some tribe or clan, the stranger or foreigner in the Caucasus is to this day an outlaw. No moral code applies to him. To destroy him is a glorious deed worthy of all praise. And every man is a stranger who does not live under one's own roof, and it is only while he finds adequate protection under another man's roof that he is to be respected, as long as nobody destroys that roof. But to be animated by any human feelings towards him amounts almost to an act of treachery. Such is the creed of all Caucasians who have built their *auls* (villages) and their strongholds in the distant gorges and mountain heights and live rigidly according to the traditional law of their land. Only the cheery Georgian knows of anything different. And Stalin is only half Georgian, the other half hails from the highlands of Ossetia, and he thinks and feels like a highlander. "He who is not with us is against us," the

slogan adopted by Lenin, does not appear either intolerant or despotic to Stalin. It is the most obvious and succinct expression of his own convictions. It represents his attitude to the world. To him the Mensheviks are not merely members of an opposing faction; they are the enemy from the neighbouring gorge.

To this day he stubbornly arrogates to himself the rights and duties of the clan chieftain. His clan has now reached colossal proportions; it fills countless neighbouring gorges, and unexpected dangers threaten from all quarters. And even the clan itself does not always observe the law of the Caucasus. It refuses to live peaceably under one roof. Right and left there is opposition, lack of discipline, and waywardnesss. The clear picture of the world has become clouded. The clan has extended beyond the Caucasus. Its ruler can no longer tell who is friend and who is foe. Convulsively he clings to the old law. He is surrounded by Caucasians. They alone have the old feeling of blood relationship. They know under whose roof they are living and they know how their chief bowed his head in obedience when he was under Lenin's roof and sat on the footstool of his favour. Without a murmur Stalin bowed to the orders and decrees of the head of his clan. He gave up thinking for himself; it was the duty of his leader, Lenin, to think for him. But now he himself has become the leader and is staggered to find that those who ought to be obeying him are beginning to think for themselves, to break the law, when all the time one man only, the leader, should think and all the rest should obey! Poor Stalin! Poor Caucasian! He is not animated by the Commissar's lust for domination. He is guided only by his Caucasian sense of order, the quintessence of the ancient and stubborn social laws of his people which will last for ever. Caucasians alone can understand the Dictator, the tyrant, the leader, whose duty it is to think and to will for the rest of the world.

Stalin is a Caucasian, and it is the Caucasian element in him, that gloomy, chivalrous, brutal, and honourable quality which makes him the greatest figure of his Party. The exiles, the mem-

bers of the opposition, and the followers of Trotsky often like to discuss his cruelty and his alleged bloodthirstiness. But the Caucasian, the chieftain of a highland clan, is neither cruel nor bloodthirsty. He is merely deliberate in a cold-blooded way and, even when he cuts his enemy to pieces, he does not do so in a fit of hysterical hatred, or out of brutal lust for blood, but with a sober belief in the necessity of his deed for the good of the clan. When once such a necessity is recognized, the Caucasian will ruthlessly murder and destroy without hesitation, in the honest conviction that against the enemy of the clan everything, literally everything, is allowable. Stalin is capable of systematic cruelty, planned over a long period of time. He is capable of a slow, purposeful, and merciless extermination of his enemy when once he has recognized him as such. But the hysterical outbursts of fury to which intellectual politicians are sometimes subject are wholly foreign to his nature and incomprehensible to him.

It is said that Trotsky, in a fit of indignation over some military reverse, was capable of having whole regiments shot down for having failed at a critical moment, and that he sentenced masses of people to death when he was in a rage. If by any chance, however, his orders had not been carried out immediately, he would cancel them when his fury had subsided and give expression to his wrath in highly polemical and extremely intellectual leading articles.

Stalin is quite incapable of acting in this way. He would never, for instance, have a whole regiment shot; but he might have the officers responsible for the reverse cut to pieces, if necessary in cold blood and in the presence of all the rank and file. When once he has passed sentence, or come to a conclusion, nothing in the world will make him recant or transmute his resolve into a leading article. There is no morbid lust of blood and nothing of the executioner about Stalin. In his heart of hearts he is a pensive Caucasian, as mild as he is wild, who merely tries to do his duty and does it as he understands it.

He has the small piercing eyes of the born fanatic and leader, but they also know how to smile, somewhat cynically and wantonly perhaps, yet they do smile and in their smile Stalin, the true Caucasian, is revealed. Abdul-Hamid and Selim-Khan, the last great mountain brigand, used to smile in this way. It is the smile of every old and experienced highland hero, a quiet, satisfied, and supercilious smiling to oneself, with the lips hardly moving and the eyes becoming gleaming slits. It is the smile of a clever old beast of prey which has been satiated and suddenly starts gambolling. A certain cynical humour is one of Stalin's characteristics, hailing from his kinto days, when he used to run half starved about the streets of Tiflis.

Refined Western intellectuals dub this humour rudeness. Stalin's rudeness has become proverbial, and even Lenin reproached him for it. In this case, however, Lenin was somewhat superficial. "Stalin is rude and disloyal," were Lenin's last words about Stalin. But what Europeans take for rudeness in him is simply his primitive good humour. It is the only human emotion in a man who may be said to have converted his life almost into a conspiracy machine. As in all Caucasians, much profound good humour lies concealed in Stalin, which only people like himself, old Caucasian warriors and conspirators, are in a position to appreciate and to judge. To other people it is incomprehensible, as incomprehensible as everything else about this great giant, this gloomy colossus, must be to the modern world. It is not Stalin's fault that he appeared in the world in an intellectual age; it is not his fault that when he gives anybody a box on the ears, meaning it merely as a kindly attention, the action should be regarded today not as a compliment, but as a piece of brutality. Lastly it is not his fault that his method of ruling, which has been sacred and traditional in the East for centuries, is regarded with horror by the respectable European Communists or those of them who give themselves European airs.

Two masters in the art of Oriental despotism stood beside Stalin's cradle at his birth—Jenghiz-Khan, the Simoon Blower,

and Shamil, the Old Man of the Mountains. Stalin is worthy of them both. Like Jenghiz-Khan, he tries to apply the laws, which were intended only for a small clan, to the whole world; and like Shamil, his great fellow-countryman, he knows how to enforce these laws. The whole ancient, traditional, cruel, colossal, and, in its way, humanly kind and sympathetic East is embodied in Stalin. It is only in the Asiatic hills, on rugged rocks of granite, that such austere men, perfect of their kind, are bred. A Simoon Blower, a Scourge of God, a Terror of the World—thus does Stalin appear, even to the members of his own Party.

In the Caucasus, the land of heroes, he would be merely an ordinary man like the rest. In the old days he would have been the founder of a dynasty and have built up a state on military power. He would have annihilated his enemies, built cities, pro-created children, and smiled good-humouredly while he watched his servants being flogged. And Eastern poets would have hymned his praises!

He possesses all the qualities calculated to make him wholeheartedly loved in the East and wholeheartedly hated and shunned in the West. Unfortunately he happens to be standing with one foot in each world. His Empire is Eurasian. In it East and West are wedded. The bad Europeans who have hitherto ruled this Empire have been replaced by a good Asiatic, and if Europe does not wholly vanish from his State forthwith it will not be the Asiatic's fault.

If we wish to judge the Dictator impartially we must regard both the man himself and his Marxist State as symbolic of the rise of Asia. From the heart of the Orient such world-conquerors as Jenghiz-Khan and Tamerlane appeared, but ingenious Europeans destroyed their work. The East was then silent for centuries, and patiently garnered fresh strength to produce a new hero. Today this latest creation of the East seems once more to have succeeded; an Oriental with crafty little eyes, an intelligent brain, and muscular hands is now ruling a sixth of the globe. His aim is one of grand simplicity. He wishes to conquer the

whole world for himself, so as to make it happy in the Asiatic way, and he does not for one moment doubt that he will be able to do so. But whether the Western world can possibly be happy in Stalin's muscular hands is open to considerable doubt in the minds of many. Once more Asia, in the person of Stalin, has armed herself for a historic fight for mankind, and coming years will show whether the modern world can tolerate a modern Jenghiz-Khan.

THE SCHOOL OF COMMUNISM

ON AN ISLAND SURROUNDED BY THE BLUE MEDITERRANEAN, THERE stands a small white marble villa.

Once upon a time there lived on this island a gloomy old Emperor. From it he ruled the world, built castles, and was constantly accusing his children, his courtiers, his wives, his generals, and his priests of treachery. The world trembled before him, and he trembled before the world. Full of fear and hatred, he at last sought refuge on the little island in the middle of the blue sea. There he would sit at the window of the palace for days at a time with his eyes closed and speaking never a word, his heart full of terror and loathing of his fellows. At last he died; possibly he was strangled. The island became a wilderness shunned by all who came after him. His palace fell into ruins, and everybody forgot both him and his island.

Many a long year afterwards the island, the ruined palace, and the warm sea beyond were once more discovered. Little steamers paddled across the water to it bearing rich strangers from the mainland, who fell in love with the Emperor's retreat. They visited the ruins of the palaces, explored the secret blue grottoes in a little boat, and were filled with astonishment and admiration.

It was Capri, the island of the blue grottoes, where the Emperor Tiberius once buried himself far away from the world. Strangers flocked to Capri from every country under the sun; all admired the same things, the ruins, the landscape, and the blue grottoes. And when they had gazed their fill they went home.

But if the strangers happened to be Russians, they made their way in fear and trembling along a narrow path through the trees leading to a lonely white villa by the sea. In the afternoon a very tall, untidily dressed man might be seen sitting in a deep arm-chair on the terrace of the marble villa, drinking tea, reading, and gazing out to sea.

All the Russians, who at the beginning of the present century visited the island, would go to pay their respects to this man. He received them with proud disdain and was as a rule cold and reserved and seldom friendly. Nevertheless the Russians regarded him as the centre of interest on the island, and when they returned to their own country, before they mentioned the grottoes and the ruins, they would tell their friends all about the reception they had been given at the hands of the world-famous author, Maxim Gorki. Gorki lived for years in aristocratic seclusion on the island of Capri. Russians invaded his house, and in the afternoon he received his guests, most of whom were uninvited, on the terrace. He gazed searchingly at them, uttered a few sarcastic or peevish remarks, and waited with obvious impatience for them to take their leave. But when on introducing himself a guest timidly gave the name of a well-known business man, or if a banker's widow, a rich landowner's wife, or a wealthy actor came to him, Gorki would immediately become friendly, and have tea served while he told spiteful stories about the literary fraternity of Moscow. While laughing and talking, he would make it plain to his guest that he regarded him as a distinguished contemporary. The guest would beam with pleasure, and think it most odd that there were some people who did nothing but inveigh against Gorki's rudeness as a host. But when the guest was about to take his departure, Gorki would lead him aside and whisper a few short and apparently telling words in his ear. The guest would then usually blush to the roots of his hair, pull out his pocket-book, look anxiously round, and then press a few five-hundred-rouble notes into the hand of the famous author.

Whereupon Gorki would go over to his desk and begin to make out a receipt. But in spite of the fact that it would have borne an interesting autograph, the guest with evident signs of alarm would assure his host that he did not want a receipt. If, however, anybody did by chance accept one, a glance was enough to make him careful to destroy it before he crossed the Russian frontier, in spite of its valuable autograph. After receiving the money Gorki usually took leave of his guest with the greatest friendliness and affability.

Visits to Gorki between 1909 and 1910 invariably ended in this way. The money he collected from his admirers was devoted to a particular purpose—the foundation of a School of Communism on the island of Capri. The idea of a Bolshevik School abroad emanated from the minds of two prominent members of the Party, Comrades Maxim Gorki and Anatol Lunacharsky. The headquarters of the school were to be at Capri and Bologna, and the money for this important enterprise was to be taken, as was most of the money for Bolshevik propaganda, from the pockets of the wealthiest people in Russia. The largest subscriptions came from Gorki himself and his wife, the actress Andreyeva. Amfiteatrov, the author, Kamensky, the famous ship-owner, and Chaliapin, the singer, also contributed a good deal to the funds. Chaliapin as a subscriber to a revolutionary party was something of an anomaly. Singing and politics have not much in common, and at that time Chaliapin was never quite at his ease with Bolshevism. But Gorki was his friend. Had they not been ragged tramps together on the Volga when Chaliapin had written short stories and Gorki had sung songs? And what were a few thousand roubles to the singer patronized by the Tsar? The rest of the money was contributed by the courteous visitors to the marble villa who could not say "No!"

The idea of founding a School of Communism was enthusiastically hailed by the Party, whose intellectual forces had been almost annihilated by the post-revolutionary reaction. Some of the members had been banished, and the rest, intimidated by

the Terror, had allowed their revolutionary convictions to drop into abeyance. The new school was intended to supply an intellectual basis to those members who, although they had qualified in the practical field, were imperfectly trained in theory. According to the original plan, the Party organizations in Russia were to send suitable men to Capri to be given a thorough course of instruction in intellectual principles by the most distinguished revolutionaries in the world. In addition to Lenin, the teaching staff was to include Plekhanov, Martov, Trotsky, Kautsky, Rosa Luxemburg, and others.

Four months was considered ample time in which to acquire an adequate knowledge of Marxian doctrines. During this period the students were to study Political Economy, the History of Political Philosophy, the Labour Movement in Europe, the History of the Russian Revolutionary Parties, the Theory and Practice of Trade Unions, the History of International and German Social-Democracy, the History of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, the History of Russia, the Agrarian Question, and the great problem of Church and State in Russia. Gorki was to be Professor of Russian Literature. All this, as we have said, was to be learnt in four months! In addition there were the practical courses on Organization, Agitation, Propaganda, and Journalism.

The School of Communism was solemnly opened on August 5, 1909. Among its pupils was Koba, the old Caucasian comrade, who was then thirty and had just succeeded in escaping from banishment in Vologda. He had crossed the frontier of Austria and come through Lemberg, Vienna, Fiume, Ancona, and Naples to Capri. Here, at the feet of the Master, he was to be given the final polish of a revolutionary. The practical school of revolution in the Caucasus, the theoretical instruction he had received in the prisons, and the debates he had conducted on Caucasian lines did not seem to him sufficient preparation for the further work he had to do in Russia, and he hoped to make

good all deficiencies with the exiles at revolutionary headquarters.

But Capri proved a bitter disappointment to him. Here for the first and last time the great Caucasian theorist and Activist came into touch with the strange world of the exiles who, seen from his Siberian banishment and from the angle of the cellar taverns of Georgia, had seemed to him the custodians of the noblest revolutionary traditions and the purest revolutionary thought. From Russia the Bolshevik exiles appeared to form a harmonious unit. Stalin discovered what they really were only when he paid his short visit to the centres where they congregated.*

The failure of the Revolution of 1905 had left the Party standing high and dry. Practical work was reduced to a minimum and ever larger numbers went into exile, where they soon degenerated. In the empty wilderness of their exiled lives, in strange surroundings, in the midst of enemies, they felt as though they had been transported to the moon. They met only men like themselves who were also exiles, and they spent long evenings together in dingy cafés. Instead of waging war against the hated Government, they kept up a bitter and hopeless struggle with the local police to whom they always constituted a thorn in the flesh. Their life was made up of trifles. Men who at home had been accustomed to decide matters of world-wide importance could now put their vast experience, their powers of persuasion, and their views as Party politicians to practical use only in settling such transcendental matters as which pot-house should be chosen for their next meeting, or in which particular type the next number of their Party organ should be printed. Their lives were concentrated round details, and, as they had been accustomed to deal with vast problems in terms of the uni-

*In any case Stalin never once failed to turn up at the secret congresses of the Bolsheviks held abroad, whether in London, Prague, Cracow, or elsewhere. He would suddenly appear at these meetings, and then return to Russia immediately.

verse, the smallest and most insignificant questions gradually assumed gigantic proportions in their eyes. They lived in a circle made up of those who thought as they did and despised the rest of the world as being beneath contempt. But owing to the fact that, as old politicians, they felt it incumbent upon them to spend their time fighting, they turned their lust for conflict and friction against each other. In exile, one's friends had to serve as one's foes. Scandalmongering, backbiting, the worst forms of slander, malice, and intolerance flourished wherever the exiles set up their tents. They themselves did not consider that they were intolerant scoundrels; they merely thought they were performing their duty to the Party and promulgating the proper point of view. In the absence of other occupations, however, scandalmongering as a Party duty loomed so large on the horizon that nowhere in the world could men be found who hated and slandered each other as much as these exiles who to all intents and purposes were bound to one another and were dependent upon one another. And when exile, as in the case of many Communists, lasted a score of years and more, the qualities it fostered became constitutional and determined the mental attitude of those who returned home and attained to any position of power. Quarrels between colleagues, spite, scandalmongering, and malice, which the Bolsheviks call *skloka*, were characteristic of the politics of the exiles long after they had ceased to be exiles and had been called upon to decide questions of world-wide importance.

If today the Communist Party in Russia is split up into innumerable groups, if the leaders charge each other publicly with the most appalling crimes, and despise and condemn each other, this is due not to their sudden rise to power but is merely the prolongation of the squabbles and gossip that took place during their years of exile. The only difference is that, whereas at that time this gossip was merely tittle-tattle confined to the exiles, the only evil result of which was to upset the victims of it, today it

occupies the attention of the Press both at home and abroad, plays a part in world politics, and for those concerned may mean banishment and even death.

The history of the Bolshevik Party before 1917 is the history of its exiles. The exiled Bolsheviks constituted a sect, a group of fanatics who regarded it as their life mission to fight those who thought differently from themselves. All questions of politics, morality, and ordinary everyday life were viewed from a narrow Party standpoint, and the whole of existence down to the most private and intimate concerns was narrowed down and defined according to the bigoted doctrines of the sect. All free expression of opinion, all free debate, was forbidden in its ranks. The members were obliged to accept the Party programme as a whole or to be anathematized as heretics. In those days, however, the Party did not possess any organized military force, no G.P.U., to enforce its resolutions. In fact they possessed very little beyond a firm belief in their personal inviolability. This fanatical sectarianism of the Bolsheviks also had its good side as far as the cause was concerned, for it irrevocably bound to them all those who instinctively demand fanaticism and narrow sectarianism.

Men like Stalin unhesitatingly submitted to orders received from the Central Committee abroad. Never for one moment did they doubt their Party gods. But the Party gods on the other hand had grave doubts about each other. At this time the exiles presented a picture of complete decay. Endless enmities, divisions, and factions occurred between them, and they fought each other in a way which even the official historian of the Party, Bogdanov, describes as "ignominious." The more trivial and insignificant the matter in dispute, the meaner were the methods adopted and the more spiteful and malicious did the leaders become. Mutual intolerance and fanatical stubbornness were paramount. The leaders were constantly excommunicating each other from the minute Party and accusing each other of opportunism and disobedience. With the best will in the world the on-

looker could not have told where true and orthodox Bolshevism was to be found, and the squabbles became even more base and acrimonious when they raged round the question of the influence to be exercised over the organizations in Russia itself. There were the most bitter fights over every member of the Party. The leaders outdid each other in slander when a few unsuspecting comrades at home, who had been drawn into the dispute, provided the bone of contention.

When Stalin made his journey to the headquarters of the exiles, he had long ceased to be merely a simple member of the Party, but was well known as an influential Caucasian fighter and local leader. The school at Capri could teach him nothing about the practical work of revolution. On the contrary, he himself might have taught such men as Comrades Gorki and Lunacharsky, who were inclined to wax lyrical, the methods of effective propaganda and the best way to fling a dynamite bomb into the ranks of the police.

Moreover, Stalin was a contributor to the Party funds; he was, so to speak, the Party's rich uncle. So what more natural in these circumstances than for the demi-gods of the Party to make a dead set at him?

The two most important Bolshevik parties in the year 1909 were the "Otsovist-Ultimatists" and the "Leninists." The point at issue between them was not concerned with any theoretical question of principle but with the question of practical propaganda. This was in the days of the third Duma in which the Bolsheviks were represented by a group of their own.

The Otsovist-Ultimatists entirely disapproved of the Bolsheviks being represented by a group in a Tsarist Duma, and, as they had done in the case of the first and second Duma, demanded a boycott of Parliament, and the recall of the Bolsheviks, that is to say, the Otsovists. They also sent in an ultimatum to the effect that the group in the Duma should form no resolutions on their own responsibility but should submit themselves to the control of the Central Committee abroad. These proposals

amounted in practice to a return to exclusively unconstitutional and illegal methods of activity.

The Leninists, on the other hand, maintained somewhat cynically that, although they had no wish to condemn illegal and unconstitutional methods of procedure, it was necessary to make the most of the unexpected toleration shown by the Government in allowing the Bolsheviks to be legally represented in the Duma. The quarrel between the Leninists and the Otsovist-Ulmatists soon assumed gigantic proportions and led to the expulsion of the Otsovists from the Party. But this did not mean a cessation of hostilities. As the Leninists did not yet possess a G.P.U., the expulsion was merely theoretical, and the leaders of the Ulmatists who had been excommunicated from the Party carried on the fight with all the greater vigour. Among these leaders there were, moreover, men no less important than Krasin, Bogdanov, and Lunacharsky.

There were also other heretics who were hotly opposed: the "God-Builders," for instance, whose leaders were suspected among other things of trying to reconcile religion and Socialism. According to Lenin, those responsible for this heresy were Gorki and Lunacharsky. There were also the "Empiriomonists," whom Lenin stigmatized as "miserable bastards of neo-Kantianism and the materialistic philosophy," and many others.

All these groups, movements, and scandals now came down like an avalanche on Stalin's unsuspecting head. As an exile just escaped from banishment he had looked up from the provinces of Bolshevism to the leaders as though they were gods.

The school at Capri which he imprudently visited was the centre of all these various factions and disputes. The founders and leaders of this school were the Otsovist-Ulmatists, Gorki and Lunacharsky, which was quite enough for Lenin to condemn the whole institution including the staff of teachers. He refused to occupy a professor's chair in this Ulmatist school, and sternly demanded that all the money collected for it should be handed over to him to found a proper school under his own

leadership in Paris. Gorki naturally refused, and another acrimonious dispute arose with further exposures of opponents, charges, and insults.

But matters did not go smoothly even with the other professors. Trotsky, who had at first consented to teach, declined at the last moment to do so. Kautsky also wrote saying that he would prefer to go on working with his pen rather than with his tongue. When Stalin arrived in Capri the whole professorial staff consisted of Otsovists who were conducting a somewhat envenomed campaign against their "venerated Comrade Lenin." Some of the professors, for instance, tried to convince Stalin that the Central Committee of the Party had not been above suspicion in the handling of the Party funds, and that Lenin ought long ago to have been deposed from the leadership. All this was, of course, said unofficially. Officially, that is to say at the lectures, Lenin was the recognized leader, but afterwards the professors would eagerly descant on his opportunist behaviour. For a while Stalin looked on in silence at the activities of this sectarian school. He had not much to learn in Capri. The days passed monotonously by. The pupils worked until twelve o'clock on their notes and exercises. The first lecture lasted from twelve to two. Dinner was served between two and four, when the whole school ate together. Between four and six there were further lectures, and then came the practical exercises. The main object of the professors throughout was to win over the pupils to the Otsovist-Ultimatists. And in many cases they succeeded. Lenin had very good reason to condemn the school.

Discord has always been rife in Communist ranks. All the subsequent leaders of the Party were in some way or other guilty of promoting it, and their names have to this day remained connected with solemn and bigoted Party resolutions, malicious speeches, and spiteful articles. Later on, Lunacharsky declared that the Bolshevik leaders in exile often hated their own partisans more than members of rival parties, such as the Social-Revolutionaries and the Anarchists. This attitude, so typical of the

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YENUKIDZE, STALIN, GORKI



factionary, is comprehensible enough. The rival parties were overt opponents; they were not bound by intimate ties and were connected with the Bolsheviks only by their common fate as exiles, whereas Bolsheviks who deviated however slightly from strict Party doctrines were heretics, comrades who had gone to Hell, and all the hatred of the mad and disappointed fanatics was concentrated on these wavering members. Just as a Christian monk often hates a Catholic heretic more than the member of another religion, so did Bolsheviks who disagreed with each other on matters of doctrine nurse a particularly venomous loathing of their opponents.

In the long list of leaders who in one way or another shared in these Party quarrels, the name of Stalin is not to be found. The Georgian Church knows of no squabbles within the fold. It knows only of a fight against those of another faith, against members of other religions.

Stalin remained stubbornly and unquestioningly devoted to the Master and despised the bickerings among the exiles. His was the contempt of the combatant who on leave from the front finds the lines of communication full of petty spite and jealousy instead of the heroism and calm confidence he had been led to expect.

Stalin, the fighter in the front line of the Revolution, felt singularly alone in the school of Capri, the lines of communication. The fighting spirit he had known at the front had faded away. Here there was nothing but gossip! Stalin was a simple, well-disciplined soldier of the Revolution. He regarded it as his duty to hate the Mensheviks, the Social-Revolutionaries, and the Anarchists, and felt that there should be order and unity within the Party, military devotion and respect for seniors and for the Commander-in-Chief. To him his natural seniors in rank were the members of the Central Committee, and the Commander-in-Chief was Lenin. He made no attempt to get to the bottom of the matters in dispute, but preferred to fulfil his duty without question.

One day he suddenly took his departure from Capri and naturally made his way to Paris, to Lenin, who always received fugitives from the school at Capri with open arms. Lenin was attended by his staff—Krupskaya, Zinoviev, and Kameniev—and for a few weeks Stalin attached himself to them. A very different atmosphere prevailed here! When pupils from Capri came to Lenin for further training, he received them coldly and condescendingly. The intellectual liberty and freedom from control customary in Capri were not to be found with Lenin.

“You won’t find intellectual liberty and rights of private judgment here!” Lenin informed every newcomer. “The Central Committee rules here.” Stalin was delighted when he heard this, for he had been accustomed to treat his Activists in similar fashion. He could understand Lenin. He was a chip of the same block as himself, cynical, slightly criminal, fond of power, intolerant, and laconic as a soldier—in short, Stalin’s beau ideal of a ruler. Lenin for his part knew how to appreciate the “legendary Georgian” at his true worth. At that time he needed him. It was in the days when he was carrying on an acrimonious dispute with Rosa Luxemburg, the point at issue being the question of nationalistic revolutions in the East. Lenin regarded the rise of Nationalism in the East as a good sign, favouring the cause of social revolution; but could advance no proofs in support of his contention, for at that time he did not know much about Oriental problems. Thus Stalin appeared at a most opportune moment. He was the only Oriental in Lenin’s circle who was also an authority on the question of Nationalism. Stalin unhesitatingly took Lenin’s side, wrote articles, and, with the weight of his experience as an old and tried fighter, completely undermined all Rosa Luxemburg’s arguments. This was all the more remarkable seeing that in Georgia he had pursued a policy which was diametrically opposed to the attitude he now adopted, and had resisted the Georgian Nationalists with all the means at his disposal. But theoretically he still upholds the fundamental principle laid down by Lenin at this time, though he did

not then worry his head about differences between theory and practice. It was only in after years that he came to appreciate these differences.

After this valuable assistance, Lenin felt that he could have full confidence in the leader of the Caucasian Activists even in matters relating to the inner mechanism of the Party. Stalin also felt this and went back to Russia a proved and loyal Leninist. At his departure Lenin is supposed to have given him for the first time his new Party name of "Stalin." His journey abroad had not changed him in any way. He had crossed half the globe from Siberia to Capri, and thence to Paris, apparently just to write a few rude polemical articles against Rosa Luxemburg. But, of course, he was quite unconscious of this anomaly. He went through Europe as though he were blind and deaf, seeing and hearing nothing. In Capri he had smoked his pipe in gloomy silence, and in Paris he had sat with Lenin in dingy suburban cafés and listened to the Master discoursing on the agrarian question and heaping curses on the heads of the Otsovist-Ulmatists. Whereupon, impervious to every outside influence, he returned to the frontiers of the Tsar's domain. He had important work to carry out for Lenin. Lenin knew how to use his men. And as, owing to the resolution passed by the Caucasian Committee, the Caucasus was closed to Stalin, he was now given the mission of fighting for the Master in St. Petersburg, the heart of the Tsar's domains and of Bolshevism.

But unfortunately he could not carry out Lenin's orders, for as soon as he reached Russia he fell into the hands of the police and was banished to Narym. It was five months before he succeeded in making good his escape, and then he found his way to St. Petersburg as Lenin's trusted emissary. With this a new era in his life began.

IN ST. PETERSBURG

THE COUNTRY ROUND ST. PETERSBURG IS DAMP AND SWAMPY, characteristic of Finland and the north. The leaden Neva, cold and melancholy, flows along through its moss-covered, wooded banks, and the icy northern lakes bound the landscape, while a biting wind blows from the sea close by. The poor Finnish fisher-folk lived in little huts along the banks of the river; they gazed up at the cloudy sky, warmed their hands at their open grates, and went off to their fishing, dropping nets that had been mended again and again into the grey waters. The Neva and the country roundabout is gloomy and cheerless as the Styx itself, the sad River of Death.

Once upon a time the Tsar with his army marched to these swampy regions. Tall as a giant, coarsely clad, with restless, fiery, and somewhat protuberant black eyes, he stood smoking his pipe on the banks of the Neva, while round about him his generals in their gold-laced uniforms were bending over their maps and plans. It was the Tsar Peter. He built the new city and in so doing opened a window in Russia on to Europe. From the south and the east, from the broad fields of central Russia, the peasants were driven in herds on to the marshy districts round the Neva. They worked obediently, reclaimed the swamps, and died. Then the Tsar drove ever fresh hordes of peasants into the swamps. They worked up to their knees in water, and thus the brilliant city of St. Petersburg came into being.

The Tsar inspected the newly built streets which were still a marsh, and supervised the work as it progressed. He was a very

bad-tempered man and used to thrash the peasants, his officers, and even his Ministers. He would walk about in German dress and his hand was heavy. For breakfast he ate a pickled gherkin and drank a whole quart of vodka. At night the peasants would be driven back to their hutments, where they would squat, all crowded together in their wooden shelters, and chew the hard bread the Tsar gave them and tremble for the morrow. During the night soldiers patrolled the city and mounted guard over the new buildings. Sentinels were posted at the entrance to the hutments and by the half-finished houses.

Very often a carriage would tear madly through the streets; it was driven by the drunken Tsar, racing along without a coachman and bringing his whip down unmercifully on the backs of the horses. With frenzied eyes he would gaze across the Neva at the palaces and the wooden hutments. Nobody in Russia knew why he had made this new city rise up out of the swamp. Did he know himself? And gradually the poor men's huts in the marshes, the villages from which the inhabitants had been driven out, the boundless steppes, and Moscow itself, the dirty city of the Boyars, were filled with horror at what was taking place on the Neva. "The Tsar is not a Tsar," whispered the Boyars, the popes, and the peasants to each other. "He is Anti-christ!"

From the northern monasteries and convents, holy men and lunatics flocked to the city in the marshes. A mad monk, named Varlaam, examined the buildings, gazed on the swamp, saw the dying peasants and the raving Tsar; then lifting his eyes to Heaven he cursed the city. "St. Petersburg will be a City of the Dead!" he cried, foaming at the mouth, to the crowd about him. And the people trembled.

To get the work finished the Tsar had recourse to more and more brutal methods. He had ten thousand peasants together with numbers of holy men and lunatics ruthlessly beheaded. The torture chambers of the city of St. Petersburg flowed red with blood. Andrey Tolstoy, the head executioner of all Russia,

whom the Tsar had recently made a Count, carried out his master's orders with slavish diligence. From time to time the Tsar himself would go down into the torture chambers where he would sit smoking his pipe and drinking vodka. Suddenly losing control, he would pester the victims and ask them, "Am I Anti-christ?" He alone in all Russia knew why the city of St. Petersburg had to rise out of the swamps round the Neva.

At last the brilliant city of St. Petersburg was finished. It was built on the bones of hundreds of thousands of peasants, and out of the swamps about the Neva they wrought their revenge upon it. The curse of the peasants, the curse of the monk Varlaam remained hanging over it; it clung to the walls and crept into the palaces of granite and marble. "St. Petersburg will be a City of the Dead!"

The years rolled by and St. Petersburg grew to be two hundred and fifty years old. Its history was written in blood amid the white northern nights, in conspiracies and insurrections. The curse was never forgotten and never lost its power.

From 1911 to 1913 the marble Winter Palace was inhabited by the pale Tsar Nicholas, the heir of Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great. In the deserted rooms of the palace he was surrounded by his courtiers, his Cossacks, and the officers of his Guard. Round about stood the proud marble buildings of the city of St. Petersburg. He lived in fear and trembling. During the white, misty, starless nights of the north he would lay his brow against the windows of the Winter Palace and gaze out upon the empty paved square in front. Beneath those flags in the swampy soil of the Neva lay the bones of the peasants. In those white nights, when he found it hard to sleep and the streets were clothed in mist, the square before the palace was deserted. One sentry alone stood on guard by the Alexander Column, and the pale Tsar of Russia, the last of the Tsars, looked out of the window. Once in 1825, nearly a hundred years before, on a dull winter's day, the Guards regiments of St. Petersburg had stood on that square. The men who were the descendants of the dead

peasants and the officers who were the descendants of the Ministers the Tsar had thrashed, stood there, row upon row, and shouted: "Down with the Tsar!" And the Tsar had replied with a hail of grapeshot.

Long afterwards, in 1905, the descendants of these soldiers in their turn flocked to the square in front of the Winter Palace; they were the workers in the factories of St. Petersburg and their leader was the pope Gapon. Once again the Tsar's reply was to shoot. But this time he was frightened; everybody was frightened! From the suburbs and the villages, from the secret printing works of the *Svesda* and the *Pravda*, the curse of St. Petersburg crept out into the light like a toad from its hole, and raised its head to the palaces and sought refuge in the luxurious apartments. Shut up in his marble halls the last of the Tsars pressed his pale face to the window and awaited fulfilment of the curse.

It was at this time that there appeared in the suburbs of St. Petersburg, in its factories and pot-houses, a strange but obviously resolute revolutionary who enjoyed the most complete confidence of the supreme heads of his Party. In each quarter of the city he went by a different name. In one factory he would be Comrade Ivanovich, in another Chichikov, or simply Peter; occasionally he would also go by the name of Stalin. He was obviously being tracked down by the police. The members of the revolutionary committees alone knew that under these names was concealed the famous Caucasian Activist, Comrade Koba, who had just succeeded in escaping for the fifth time from Siberia and who enjoyed Lenin's special confidence.

This was not the first time Stalin had been to St. Petersburg. He had lived there as an agitator in 1910, though he had played no part in the more important revolutionary work. At that time he had just escaped from Solyvichegodsk; he had crossed Russia and made his way to St. Petersburg, where, after working for three months, he had been arrested together with the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks and banished to Vologda. And now

he had returned for the second time as a trusted emissary of Lenin. He lived a strange life in St. Petersburg. He had no proper home, no passport, no certificate of identity. He spent his nights first with one comrade, then with another, and would saunter apparently aimlessly through the industrial quarters of the city gazing with admiring eyes on the outside of the huge Putilov factory with its 30,000 workers. What he really did was and still is a mystery. In his shabby clothes, with his pipe in his mouth, he often appeared at revolutionary meetings. With other strange apparitions he would drink his tea in dingy taverns, and at night freeze in the cold white streets of the city. His real function was known only to the most intimate circles of the Communists, the Bolshevik members of the Duma and the Central Committee. They alone were aware that this insignificant-looking, silent man was really the leader of the Party in Russia, and of the Bolshevik group in the Duma, and that he had been specially appointed to the position by Lenin.

In those days two Bolshevik papers were successively founded in St. Petersburg, the *Svesda* and the *Pravda*. They were produced in a perfectly legal way and their printing works, their contributors, and editors all enjoyed a legal status. But the editors had no say in the conduct of the paper and even less in its policy. The official director, who determined their attitude and inspired their articles, was Stalin, the insignificant Georgian. But his mission was not limited to directing a few newspapers with small circulations. He was also the inspirer of the Bolshevik group in the Duma, the official leader of which was Malinovsky. Thus he had almost the whole Party machinery inside Russia in his hands, nor is it surprising that he should have been raised to this unlawful and extremely responsible position. The Bolshevik Party in Russia was at that time extremely small. Even Krassin, the experienced St. Petersburg conspirator, had been forced to go into exile abroad, and those members of the Party who were able to remain at their posts were distinguished less by their active work than by their preoccupation with doc-

trine. Thus Stalin, a man of energy and a born conspirator, was just the leader that was wanted. Besides him, the only man of any importance among the St. Petersburg Bolsheviks was Malinovsky, the official leader of the group and one of Lenin's confidants. He and Stalin kept in constant communication with Lenin. Malinovsky often went to the Austrian frontier where he received long speeches written by the Master dealing with the Bolshevik programme, and he and other Bolsheviks in the Duma would proceed to repeat them as their own. But if time pressed, everything else connected with the group and the Party, the organization of secret propaganda and the endless work of conspiracy, was settled by Stalin and Malinovsky on their own responsibility. With Malinovsky's help Stalin also conducted the elections for the fourth Duma, maintained secret communications with the workers, and founded new Party centres and groups.

But for some reason, nothing prospered at this time; everything went wrong. The most experienced conspirators were arrested, the most carefully thought out plans miscarried, and the police seemed to get on the tracks of the Bolsheviks everywhere. Stalin found it more and more difficult to conceal himself, and he changed his abode, his name, and his appearance more frequently than ever. In the end he even had to forsake the homes of his Bolshevik comrades where he no longer felt safe at night, and sought refuge among the Mensheviks whom he hated, and with their Social-Democratic leader, Dan, who gave him hospitality for a while. But even this did not save him.

In spite of his long years of experience as a conspirator, he was one day arrested in the rooms of a Bolshevik member of the Duma. Once more, of course, nothing could be proved against him, but on this occasion the police were very well informed regarding his previous activities. They could bring no charge against him but, as they knew that he was Lenin's confidential agent, they sentenced him to banishment to the worst possible spot they could think of—the village of Kureika beyond the

Arctic Circle, from which nobody had ever been known to return.

It was only after the triumph of the Bolshevik Revolution that Stalin learnt why he had been so constantly outwitted at this time. He also discovered how the police had become so well acquainted with his previous career. Among the archives of the St. Petersburg police which he examined immediately after the downfall of the Republican Government, he found the answer to the riddle. His old friend and colleague, Comrade Malinovsky, the leader of the Bolshevik group in the Duma, had for years been a well-paid *agent provocateur* employed by the police. At the time of the Bolshevik triumph, Malinovsky was living abroad, but with consummate skill and pretending that he had no suspicions about him, Stalin succeeded in luring his "old friend" back to Russia. Malinovsky arrived and was solemnly convicted and shot. Such was the end of the Bolshevik leader of the Duma!

The period of Stalin's life in St. Petersburg is the most obscure in his career. Very little is known of his activities as a conspirator or about his exploits both successful and unsuccessful, of which there must have been plenty. His lawless existence enabled him, in spite of the high position he held in the Party, to conceal the details of his life even from his intimates. From his earliest youth he had loved to wrap himself in mystery, and he would have given much to be able to keep the whole of his career up to the time of Lenin's death a secret. But this he was not allowed to do. His Party assured him that future generations would take a burning interest in every moment of his life. Stalin listened sullenly. He cares not a rap about the interest of future generations. He is and always has been by nature a mysterious figure, a sort of Communist Basil Zakharov, who believes that he has ample reason for shunning the interest of the public. So he does his best to put obstacles in the way of future generations, not because he feels that his past is hardly compatible with his present exalted position as the autocratic leader of his Party,

but merely as the result of his innate love of conspiracy and his old habit of hushing up and making a mystery of everything as far as possible. Like many old conspirators he shuns the light, and every breath of publicity is almost physical anguish to him.

In the case of St. Petersburg Stalin had not much difficulty in covering up his tracks. Immediately after the triumph of the Bolsheviks, he hastened to the police archives, where he found that everything he had done and said had been reported to the police by Malinovsky, and carefully preserved. With these reports he also found his letters from banishment and an accurate record of all he had said and tried to do while he was in St. Petersburg. Delighted beyond measure, he destroyed this huge sheaf of police papers and with it a period of his life was wiped out. In his official biographies he has allowed the following short sentence to be published as covering this epoch: "In St. Petersburg he directed the publication of the *Pravda*, controlled the Bolshevik group in the Duma, and was arrested at the house of Petrovsky."

Ten years later Trotsky scoffed somewhat spitefully at the fact that such a prominent member of his Party as Stalin should be so anxious to blot out a period of his life. The explanation Trotsky offered was simple enough. He declared that in those days Stalin probably inclined towards Menshevism and has therefore done his utmost to cover up his tracks. There is too little of the conspirator in Trotsky to enable him to understand the motives of a man like Stalin!

BANISHMENT IN SIBERIA

SIBERIA WAS NO NEW EXPERIENCE TO STALIN. HE WAS ONLY TOO familiar with the snow-covered steppes, the great frozen rivers, the crooked, stumpy trees, and the "villages," which often consisted only of one hut and five or six inhabitants. He was banished to Siberia six times in all and five times he succeeded in escaping from the white wilderness after a sojourn of only a few months or even weeks. But he was sent back again often after only a short spell of freedom. He spent the interval between two periods of banishment in feverish political work, which he carried on as an outlaw in all parts of Russia. Except for the short spell in 1903, his chief terms of exile in Siberia took place between 1908 and 1917. In 1908 he was banished from Baku to Vologda. He managed to escape after a few months, returned to Baku, was again arrested and banished in 1909 to Solyvichegodsk. A year later he escaped and went to St. Petersburg, where he was arrested immediately on his arrival and again sent to Vologda, but he escaped abroad in 1911. Foreign countries, however, did not appeal to him. He returned to St. Petersburg, was arrested in April 1912, and banished to Narym in Siberia. In September he again appeared in St. Petersburg and in March 1913 he was arrested for the last time by the exasperated authorities and banished to the village of Kureika in the Government of Turakhansk beyond the Arctic Circle. There he was hampered not only by his bleak and desolate surroundings but also by the fact that he was placed in charge of a warder specially selected to watch over him, which made all hope of escape impossible. It

was only when the Revolution of 1917 broke out that he was set free. Thus, with short intervals, he spent almost ten years in exile in Siberia, a period which may be treated more or less as a whole, though it had important breaks during which he was free.

For generations Siberia, as well as the inevitable terms of imprisonment, had constituted a school of life for Russian revolutionaries. What freedom could not teach them, they had ample opportunity of experiencing in Siberia—brutal treatment from the authorities, a hard struggle with inclement nature, and complete solitude. But the convicts did not all live the same life in banishment. Conditions varied according to the magnitude of the crime they had committed, and were naturally hardest in the case of the lowest class of convict, who were condemned to actual servitude in Siberia. Nobody had ever been known to escape from the cells of a Siberian prison, at least, such cases could be counted on the fingers of one hand and have become classical. Men who were banished to Sakhalin or one of the other well-known convict prisons in Siberia had done with politics for the rest of their lives!

The next class consisted of those who had been sentenced to deprivation of all rights and condemned to banishment in some settlement in a particularly remote district of Siberia. Their situation was often desperate. They were sent to some region of perpetual snow and ice and forced to support themselves as best they could. The authorities were well aware that the position of an intellectual revolutionary in a village in the Arctic zone was pretty hopeless and it was chiefly for this reason that they sent him there. Nevertheless, though they had been deprived of all rights, they could receive money from home if they had anybody to send it to them, and were not watched over by anyone, so that, but for the penalties threatened by the regulations on those attempting to do so, there was nothing to prevent them from escaping. True, the punishment in such cases was severe. If a man who had been deprived of all rights

was caught on the frontier of his district in the act of escaping, he was given a year's imprisonment; if he was caught on the frontier of the Government area, he got five years; and if he had succeeded in getting as far as the actual frontier of Siberia, an unlimited period of strict detention in some convict jail was his portion. But in spite of these heavy penalties, this class of convict fled by hundreds, though they did not remain in Russia but went to swell the ranks of exiles abroad.

The third class of Siberian exile consisted of those who had not been sentenced by a court of law but had been banished by the police to some more or less remote part of Siberia. This class received State aid and if they tried to escape the worst that could befall them was to be returned to the village they had left. They too escaped in large numbers, but as a rule the Government did not go to any great pains to track them down.

On arriving in the town belonging to their district, their names were entered on the rolls, and more often than not the authorities would then ask them whether they intended to make their escape at once or to postpone it to some later date. In the charge of some petty officer chosen from among the warders, they were then taken to the village allotted to them, and in the company of the same man would, as a rule, make their escape back to civilization. The warders took the whole proceeding quite philosophically and did not attempt to prevent their charges from getting away. All that happened was that their names were struck off the rolls. But if they were exhausted by the long journey out, they would wait a few months, or until the summer came, or after they received money from friends, before calmly leaving their place of exile. The various methods of escape had been thoroughly studied by the revolutionary parties, and if necessary a special committee helped a man to get away and sometimes the Party supplied him with money. But this only happened in the case of a man who had a particular duty to perform for the Cause. Thus banishment to

Siberia by the police was clearly not the worst fate that could overtake a revolutionary, though the interminable journey and the long detention in prison before banishment were often intolerable. Escorted by soldiers, beaten and insulted, political prisoners often had to walk on foot for hundreds of miles across Siberia. But as soon as they reached their place of banishment, they generally met friends and colleagues in similar plight, and soon felt at home, with the added advantage that their political misdemeanours could now no longer get them into trouble. For a weary and harassed revolutionary leading the life of an outlaw, banishment was often as good as being sent to a sanatorium.

This curious form of banishment, which is so unlike what most people imagine the life of a political exile to be, was regarded even by the Government as not altogether effective; but they were obliged to have frequent recourse to it because at this time the prisons were so full that it was impossible to accommodate any more convicts, and even if they had wished to do so they had not the means at their disposal to build and staff new prisons. At least, banishment to some village in Siberia relieved the authorities concerned for some time of a tiresome and suspicious character, against whom unfortunately nothing deserving of punishment could be proved. If the exile returned, he was sent back to Siberia in the unexpressed hope that the next time he escaped he would favour some other part of Russia with his presence. It was up to the individual to take care not to be indicted for some punishable offence which would bring him into a court of law, and to leave the police no alternative but to send him to Siberia after keeping him in prison while he underwent his examination.

Stalin, the most cautious of outlaws, was always sent to Siberia as an "administrative" exile. He had been guilty of many a deed deserving of death or penal servitude or at least a term of imprisonment. The police regarded him as a "very danger-

ous" man, and the authorities were ordered not to let him go out of their sight. But they could never succeed in proving anything against him or even in committing him for trial. He was as elusive as a will-o'-the-wisp! Nobody knew where he lived, and if, owing to somebody else's imprudence or through treachery, he was arrested, the only possible charges that could be brought against him were such as to bring a smile to the lips of those familiar with his past—such misdemeanours as the dissemination of forbidden literature, the organization of strikes or May Day celebrations, or being connected with illicit printing works. But such peccadilloes as these could hardly lie very heavily on the conscience of a man responsible for the great Ex in Tiflis. Yet even such staggering crimes as these could only be half proved, while his more serious outrages were merely matters of casual suspicion.

Stalin's case certainly reflects no credit on the Russian police. He always survived his Siberian experiences without being any the worse for them; whether he was stopping in a town or village, travelling by sleigh or on foot, isolated on the snowfields, or shut up in the district prisons, he was always perfectly happy. Even the extreme cold, so trying to the southerner, he endured with surprising equanimity. Wrapped in an old sheepskin, he would march at the head of the column, glancing malevolently at the escort of Cossacks, and was constantly on the alert to see that he received the respect due to a political convict. Men who accompanied him on these journeys declare that the Cossacks heartily loathed this gloomy individual with his sinister looks, and would often try to provoke him and make him lose his temper. But apparently it is quite impossible to make Stalin forget himself. He treated all ordinary vexations with lofty indifference and in prison no longer took any share in the organized protests. Personal assaults on the part of the Cossacks he met only with a look, but people say it was a look that made the man against whom it was directed run for dear life. He gave the impression of being capable in the dead of night of pressing

two fingers in the old Caucasian manner on a Cossack's throat and of thus bringing his life to an end in the simplest possible way.

When he reached the principal town in the district to which he had been banished, Stalin, unlike the other exiles, did not crack jokes with the police or declare that he would go home by the next steamer; but all who saw him knew that he would be the first to turn his back on the white wastes.

Nothing could prevent Stalin from escaping except a particularly severe winter, but, as soon as spring came and the first steamer sailed down the river, he would calmly board it and go. Even the police, hardened as they were, could not help being staggered by his impudence. But when Party duties called, when he learned that old Bolsheviks were expecting his return, not even winter would stop him. He would then get into a sleigh and dash headlong away, avoiding the police until he reached his destination or had carried out the task set him by the Party.

When the Party were unable for the moment to place the money for flight at his disposal, or when he himself wished to rest until the summer, his appearance among a little colony of exiles always led to an extraordinary revival of spirits. Intensive revolutionary work was immediately set on foot. False passports were distributed. Comrades who had grown slack and discouraged were incited to escape and undertake fresh work for the Party, and communication with the outside world was successfully established. Stalin would travel unmolested across the Siberian desert, visiting the Bolsheviks in the neighbourhood and investigating their manner of life. Many a leading Bolshevik owed his forged passport and means of escape to the assiduity with which Stalin roved the wilds of Siberia. But even here he contrived in masterly fashion to keep in the background, and even the fugitives themselves did not know that they owed their escape to secret machinations on his part. In the easygoing atmosphere of Vologda, at all events, he cleared the whole district of Bolsheviks, and it was only when the last Bolshevik had

left the district that he solemnly boarded the steamer and left Siberia.

As soon as Stalin appeared in a new place of exile, he inquired into the political persuasions of his companions in misfortune and took particular interest in the number of Mensheviks. And if he found Mensheviks in any particular area, he would immediately open a campaign against the detested rival Party. His bigoted fanaticism could find as little rest in banishment as it did in Bailov.

Although outwardly they led much the same existence as ordinary criminals, the lives of those who had been banished to Siberia by the police were not particularly arduous. Unlike ordinary criminals who had no protection against the rigours of nature and the elements and the brutality of the police, the political prisoners were officially organized into unions, which provided for their well-being and controlled their relations with the police. The strict discipline that prevailed among these political groups inspired the police with the greatest respect. The political exiles would tolerate no insults, at all events none that could be publicly expressed. They insisted on being addressed respectfully and regarded suicide as the simplest way of wreaking their revenge on the police. Cases have been known of political exiles, outraged by the behaviour of an officer, stripping in the middle of the ice and snow and declaring that they would freeze to death unless they were assured that the offender would be transferred. The news of such cases spread like wildfire all over Russia, much to the disgust of the police and, as Stalin often remarked, served to foster the revolutionary spirit.

The police thought it best to interfere as little as possible in the lives of the exiles. They left them, so to speak, to stew in their own juice, and were only too pleased to hear as little about them as possible. Only now and again, when a particularly notorious offender happened to be summoned before the Governor regarding some term of punitive detention, did the police, in the privacy of the orderly room, place a gag in his mouth

and flog him unmercifully. Stalin used the freedom the exiles enjoyed in order to fight the Mensheviks. Although in banishment the various political parties used to agree to sink their differences so as to facilitate such necessary labours as, for example, the hewing of wood, Stalin regarded it as his bounden duty never to allow the colony to forget "the abyss which separated the Bolsheviks from the Mensheviks." Occasional thrashings and the usual endless debates did not seem to him enough, and he therefore seized every opportunity of expounding the genuine Bolshevik point of view.

The first occasion for a practical demonstration of Bolshevism occurred in the year 1911 in the village of Baklanikha, in the district of Turakhansk, where there was a fairly large colony of exiles. The village of Baklanikha was a terrible place, forsaken even by the authorities, and for lack of anything better the few native inhabitants looked up to the exiles as the heaven-sent lords of creation, and treated them as warders were treated elsewhere. Whenever disputes arose or hand-to-hand fights or similar disturbances occurred, the exiles were called upon to act as judges. They were also expected to see that the peasants and the criminal exiles lived together on normal, neighbourly terms. Nor need we feel astonished at this relationship between the natives and the exiles. For in the endless wastes of Siberia the latter were the only representatives, however poor, of a higher culture. In the past, cases had even occurred when a Governor General in Siberia, a man who was absolute ruler of an area larger than Europe, had appealed to the exiles and asked their advice about the administration of his district. And thus from a place of banishment important ideas might, in certain circumstances, often reach the outside world. The peasants, too, naturally regarded the exiles as creatures of a higher type to whom they could turn for advice and help.

One day the following incident occurred in the village of Baklanikha. A criminal called Balanovsky, and nicknamed Sea-gull, had been guilty of robbing one of the native peasants.

As Seagull had been banished for various crimes and could not be banished again, any complaint to the authorities would have been utterly useless. The peasants therefore turned to the political exiles to settle the matter privately for them, and with their own high authority to punish the thief in an exemplary manner. The exiles eagerly seized the opportunity of publicly putting their socialistic ideas of justice into practice, and as usual elected a court of honour on parliamentary lines, in which Mensheviks, Bolsheviks, and Social-Revolutionaries of the Right and Left were represented. Comrade Stalin was chosen as the Bolshevik representative. The thief Seagull was brought up for trial. He wept and wailed, declaring that he had stolen from habit but that under the noble influence of the political exiles he would certainly reform his ways. He therefore implored the exiles not to punish him too severely, though he would not mind expiating his sin by receiving a few strokes with a stick. He also swore by all the saints that he would never touch vodka again. At length, with one last sob, he rose and crept into a corner and quietly awaited his sentence. The peasant who had been robbed now came forward and, pulling a long face, described how he had befriended Seagull and had received but a sorry return for his kindness. The peasants of Baklanikha listened to this speech with deep emotion. The Court then rose, burning with righteous socialistic indignation. Theft was a crime that must not be allowed to occur in any district where Socialists were the custodians of morality! The thief Seagull was a ne'er-do-well and outcast, whose presence was a blot on the village of Baklanikha!

Everybody present, including the class-conscious Socialists and the thief himself, was deeply moved and convinced that the accused would now be declared guilty.

Suddenly Stalin sprang to his feet, and begged a hearing as the representative of the Social-Democratic Bolsheviks. Seagull, he declared, was a professional thief. All he could do was to steal. But it was most immoral to prevent a man from exercising

his profession, particularly when it happened to be stealing. For it was precisely this profession which was best calculated to undermine the foundations of the capitalistic order of society. It was therefore incumbent on all Socialists of whatever category to support Seagull, and to teach him class-consciousness and the social necessity for his calling in an age of triumphant Capitalism! He, for his part, hailed Seagull as a champion of the oppressed!

Utterly taken aback, the representatives of triumphant Capitalism, the peasants of Baklanikha, dropped their eyes to the ground. Their minds, unschooled in Marxian philosophy, could not cope with such arguments. The Mensheviks, on the other hand, were furious. After that, how could they possibly co-operate with such people, they asked each other in consternation. And springing to their feet, they informed the assembly that a great gulf separated them from the Bolsheviks, who could hardly be regarded as Socialists at all. The peasants accepted this explanation, too, but Stalin went out with a scowl on his face and left the elements of class enmity to fight the matter among themselves.

This incident made Stalin's name familiar far and wide among the political exiles, and the wild Caucasian Bolshevik formed a constant topic of conversation. He soon gave the Mensheviks fresh cause for indignation in connexion with the complicated and thorny problem of Nationalism. Among the Siberian exiles there were men belonging to every nation to be found in the Russian Empire—Georgians, Armenians, Jews, Poles, and even Russians. Many of them were not only Socialists but also Nationalists, and in their discussions the Nationalist question necessarily came frequently to the fore. But in connexion with this subject, the revolutionaries were particularly cautious. The oppression of the various peoples under the Tsarist regime naturally led them to feel exceptionally friendly towards every nation, and the more oppressed it was the more considerately did they treat it. Now the most oppressed people in the whole of

Tsardom were the Jews, and the Socialists felt themselves in honour bound to treat them with the utmost respect. Thus they feared the charge of Anti-Semitism almost more than the suspicion of being in league with the police, and there was no better way of discrediting a Party opponent than by accusing him of being an Anti-Semite. As a Bolshevik, Stalin naturally adopted a radical attitude towards the problem of Nationalism. And as he himself was a member of a small and therefore oppressed people, he eagerly joined in any discussions on the Nationalist question, and willingly read papers on the subject, for he had plenty of time for such trifling matters as this in the wilds of Siberia. Naturally, even on this question, he never allowed an opportunity to slip of branding the opportunist attitude of the Mensheviks, and of condemning the slightest hint of Nationalism.

“The Nationalism of the Russian peoples must be crushed with an iron hand,” he used to declare at these discussions. On the other hand he charged the Mensheviks with every conceivable crime against Nationalism and demanded the full right of self-determination for all peoples. Not many years later the course of events made Stalin a pillar of imperialistic policy in Russia, while the Mensheviks put into practice the self-determination theory which Stalin had supported in Siberia. They were, therefore, together with Bolsheviks of separatist sympathies, banished by Stalin into the very Siberian wilderness where not so long ago they had listened with indignation to his theoretical expositions.

But even Stalin could not at that time foresee the course of events, and, when in the year 1911, in the village of Monastyrka, the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries once more proposed a debate on Nationalism, Stalin made a point of being present and taking part in the discussion. He never conformed to parliamentary rules of oratory and despised such clichés as “the honourable opener” or “with all due respect.” Even today, at meetings of the Council of People’s Commissars he often uses

expressions which make the most hardened Bolsheviks blush. But in those days in the wilds of Siberia, he took such expressions as a matter of course. Nevertheless, things did not go well for him in the debates that took place in Monastyrka. His opponents were Mensheviks well schooled in theory, and his usual sombre arguments and endless quotations fell on deaf ears. He poured forth his abuse and venom with cold-blooded deliberation. His opponents followed suit, though possibly in more parliamentary language. But they were somehow too subtle for him, and he found it ever more and more difficult to refute their arguments. Although he had mastered the Russian language, he did not know it sufficiently well to be able to reply forcibly when he was taken unawares on some unfamiliar subject. His chief Menshevik opponent, who was a Russian Jew, did not, however, understand Georgian. When, therefore, Stalin found himself cornered by this man's forcible and intellectual Menshevik arguments, he lost patience. His Russian vocabulary was exhausted and, purple with rage, he bowed his head. "Uria momatskhali!" he muttered in Georgian, clenching his teeth in fury. This means "stinking Jew!" Now, as chance would have it, there happened to be one or two people present who understood a little Georgian. Consequently the words were immediately translated and an uproar, unusually wild even for the revolutionaries, immediately arose. The Mensheviks and the Social-Revolutionaries of the Left and Right were genuinely indignant. This wild Bolshevik was publicly flouting the best traditions of the Russian Revolution. "There you have the Bolshevik!" cried Stalin's opponents triumphantly. "What can one expect of such people! They are even Anti-Semites!" The debate was broken off, and the proceedings ended in a series of passionate speeches in which the comrades exhorted each other not to allow the most elementary rules of revolutionary decency to be violated.

Scowling and covered with confusion, Stalin crept into the darkest corner of the room, silently damning the whole crew of

Mensheviks and Anti-Semites. To excuse himself would have been extremely difficult. How could he explain to this gathering of his enemies that although "Uria momatskhali" did literally mean "stinking Jew," it was constantly used by Georgians as a general and quite mild term of abuse very similar to "Go to the devil!" and had nothing whatever to do with Anti-Semitism, which was non-existent in Georgia. His opponents, to whom such philological arguments would not have appealed, would simply have laughed in his face?

After this incident it was rumoured that the egregious leader of the Transcaucasian Activists was among other things also an Anti-Semite. His subsequent conflict with Trotsky confirmed this belief, and there were some who ascribed the whole of his difference with the Trotsky group to his Anti-Semitism. But they forgot that Litvinov, Stalin's Foreign Minister, and many other men among his favourites, are Jews, and that Kaganovich, his present favourite, whom he raised to a very high position in the Government, is also a Jew. His original allies in his conflict with Trotsky, moreover, were the Jews Kameniev and Zinoviev. Nevertheless the legend which had emanated from Siberia still clung to him and was absurdly exaggerated, though few of those who regard him as a modern Torquemada know how the myth arose.

The supernationalist Stalin is, of course, like the rest of the Caucasians, no Anti-Semite; but this incident led to further estrangement between him and the non-Bolshevik exiles. In the village of Monastyrka he felt singularly alone, not so much because of a lack of revolutionaries with whom to consort as a lack of his fellow-countrymen. In order to live, Stalin must be surrounded by Caucasians, and even in the Kremlin he has Caucasians, Georgians, Armenians, and Ossetes constantly about him. In the wilds of Monastyrka, surrounded by Mensheviks, who despised him as an Anti-Semite, he felt a gnawing hunger for his fellow-countrymen. As a matter of fact there were one or two Georgians among the exiles, but they were Mensheviks, the

people who had cast him out of the Party, and he absolutely declined to have anything to do with Mensheviks.

Yet in Monastyrka there was one other man who was not only a Caucasian but also an Ossete, and Stalin always had a soft corner in his heart for Ossetes. Was he not half Ossete himself and did he not speak Ossetian if anything better than he spoke Georgian? Was he not born in Gori, close to the frontier of southern Ossetia? For years Stalin had not heard a word of Ossetian spoken and now he was next-door neighbour to the only Ossete of the district—a district larger than the whole of Europe! This man, Kabirov by name, was the police inspector of Monastyrka and therefore no fit associate for a political exile. But Police Inspector Kabirov, like Stalin, was suffering from homesickness. He was a very tall, brutal man, with the face of a murderer, and the manner of a Caucasian robber. Caucasian robbers who are ambitious and wish to rise in life become either revolutionaries, or officers, or policemen. Stalin became a revolutionary and Kabirov a policeman, and in the wilds of Siberia both of them felt abandoned by God and man. Although it was the duty of the inspector as a Government servant to keep watch over Stalin, and Stalin's duty as a conscientious revolutionary sooner or later to escape from the inspector, the two very soon became fast friends. The Caucasian police officer did not feel very much more at home in Siberia than did the exile. At first the two met in the street, spoke to each other in Ossetian, and as they had much in common they became more and more friendly. Stalin would pay occasional visits to the police inspector, drink a glass of wine with him, and talk to him in his native language. And when the latter moved to a new hut and celebrated the occasion by giving a house-warming, Stalin was sent an invitation. He accepted, drank his host's Georgian wine, talked to him about his distant home in the mountains of Ossetia, and sang melancholy Ossetian, Georgian, and Siberian songs. It was daylight before he went home.

This friendship between a police officer and a political

convict did not long remain hidden from the honest Mensheviks who set the tone in the village, and once again their revolutionary conscience was up in arms. For after all Stalin, although a Bolshevik and an Anti-Semite, was a revolutionary and ought therefore to have known how to behave! So they appointed a Court and summoned Stalin to appear before it to account for his actions if he still wished to be regarded as a Socialist. The members all made long speeches censuring his conduct. They said it was very sad to see a young Bolshevik degenerating in this way (Stalin was thirty-two at the time) and finally urged that certain penalties laid down in the Party rules should be imposed on him for his tactlessness. Stalin spoke extremely briefly in his own defence, which amounted virtually to an admission that he was on friendly terms with his fellow-countryman, Kabirov. "But," he added, "if I should ever come across my friend in the political arena or cross swords with him on a question of politics, I would not, of course, hesitate for a single moment to do away with him as a class enemy." In spite of this assurance, the Court passed a resolution of censure against him.

Surrounded by his enemies the Mensheviks, Stalin the Caucasian became ever more isolated and lonely. The Mensheviks, the peasants, and the police kept watch and ward over the village of Monastyrka, and all around stretched the endless snow wastes of Siberia, a desolate, isolated, flat and frozen country where there was never a soul to be seen. The dark nights seemed endless, the lowering sky always grey and cloudy. There was nothing in the Siberian landscape to remind him of his bright and cheerful home in the Caucasus. In his little hut everything was cold and bare. As soon as he got up in the morning, he looked gloomily out of the window, sawed up a little wood in the yard, and sauntered through the snow-covered village; later on he would lie for hours on his plank bed waiting for the night to come. The Mensheviks never visited him. But a young Siberian girl used to creep into his hut at night and share his bed with

him. She liked this silent man with his pockmarked face. In Siberia the nights are endless and Stalin would lie silent and gloomy by the girl's side, thinking of the Caucasus, the World Revolution, and his distant comrades. But in the village of Monastyrka nothing remained hidden from the exiles. They knew that Stalin was an Anti-Semite. They also knew that he associated with a police officer, and now, to crown all, they learnt that he had not even been able to control his savage lusts in the presence of a chaste young Siberian girl. The girl's father also found out what had happened, and the axe which was brought out on such occasions was sharp and heavy! Stalin was only too well aware of this, and he took the first steamer down the river and left Siberia.

A few months later he again fell into the hands of the police. This time they were really angry. The fellow had escaped five times running from Siberia and yet had not abandoned his revolutionary activities or had the decency to take refuge abroad! So they decided to put an end to his machinations once and for all. As usual, however, it was impossible to bring any definite charge against him, and all the authorities could do was once more to send him into banishment on a police order, though the sentence was more severe than it had ever been before. He was banished to the village of Kureika in the province of Turakhansk beyond the Arctic Circle. Only the bureaucratic authorities could have dignified Kureika with the name of village. It had barely a dozen inhabitants; a few huts stood in the middle of a *taiga* (frozen wooded area) on the bank of a broad ice-bound river; and the wide damp tundra stretched all round for miles, utterly deserted by man and beast. The people of the village were uncommunicative Siberian peasants who hated everything that came to them from foreign parts, and knew nothing beyond their fishing, their hunting, their God, and the melancholy legends that sprang up from the snow around them. Only once in a blue moon did nomadic Siberian tribes come to the village.

They looked with suspicious eyes at the brawny, white-skinned peasants who gave them brandy in exchange for their furs. "The white man is the bastard of the whore and the seal!" they would say, and never for one moment did the Siberian native doubt the truth of this saying. It was impossible to foist Marx upon the Siberian! Where the shaman speaks, the Marxist must hold his tongue! Without a penny in his pocket and his sole possession the pipe between his teeth, Stalin went north. On the way a Social-Revolutionary colleague sold him some fishing tackle for fifteen roubles, and it is characteristic of his material position at this time that he found it impossible to pay the fifteen roubles for many years.

In the village of Kureika he led the primitive life of the Arctic hunter and fisherman, though he was no longer allowed the freedom of movement he had before enjoyed. Although escape from Kureika would have been impossible on account of its geographical position alone, the Government had him constantly watched by a head warder whose only duty it was to keep close on his heels. It is difficult to say whether Stalin or the warder suffered most from this.

Stalin now spent his life on the river bank. With the simplest of fishing tackle, some of which he had made with his own hands, he fished for salmon, redfish, and other varieties of fish. There were no Mensheviks or revolutionaries of any kind in Kureika, and the usual Party disputes which had whiled away the time so pleasantly during his previous periods of exile in Siberia were indefinitely postponed. He hardly ever came into touch with the native peasants. They did not understand his Caucasian pronunciation of Russian, and his intercourse with the Siberian nomads was even more restricted. They worshipped the water-god Teb-Tengri and the trees of the taiga. From the revolutionary standpoint they were hopeless!

In spite of his solitude, and the bitter Siberian climate so trying to his Caucasian blood, life in the village of Kureika suited Stalin very well. His muscles developed and he looked

fresh and healthy. After his strenuous existence as a conspirator, the simple life of a hunter and fisherman constituted for him a period of rest and recuperation. Nor did he mind the solitude, for even among his Party comrades, unless they were old "Exists," he had always felt lonely at heart. He had come to the village of Kureika after having worked extremely hard in St. Petersburg, after bitter quarrels between the various groups of the Party, and after a flying visit to the great exiles in western Europe. His association with the leaders of the Party, and his complicated theoretical work in St. Petersburg had polished up his dialectical powers, and in the absence of Menshevik opponents and Party debates, he determined to employ the unlimited time at his disposal in Kureika in theoretical works. At night when the village was buried in sleep he would light the little tallow lamp which was the only artificial light of which Kureika boasted and, sitting in a roughly made chair, would begin to write. And thus a series of brutal, gloomy, and, as Trotsky observed, from the Marxian point of view quite elementary treatises came into being. Theory was never Stalin's strong point. Nevertheless, he put his elementary sentences to paper and thus placed his simple, straightforward views on record in black and white. This writing took the place of the debates he had been accustomed to organize and the fights that followed.

Years went by in this way. Stalin fished and wrote, while from time to time Marxist literature would come along which he eagerly devoured. Once or twice he was visited by convicts who were passing through, otherwise he was entirely cut off from the world. Somewhere or other the usual Party work was in progress, and political debates and struggles were taking place. Somewhere or other, too, far, far away the War was raging! Stalin lived alone, gloomy and reserved, smoking his pipe, eating his fish, and writing. Year after year passed by, and his life was always the same; but never once did he show the smallest sign of despair. His belief in the advent of the Revolution was unbroken and his faith unshakable! Five long Siberian

years did Stalin, the man of action, spend helpless and inactive in the village of Kureika, smoking, thinking, and waiting. Then suddenly the much longed-for Revolution came as a shock to the whole world! The revolutionary parties went mad with joy. Stalin did not go mad! Calmly and deliberately he slowly packed up his belongings, smoked his last pipe in exile, and travelled still silent and gloomy down the icy river to Russia and the Revolution!

PART TWO

THE DICTATOR

THE GREAT STRUGGLE BEGINS

AT LAST AFTER LONG YEARS OF PATIENT WAITING AND LONGING the Revolution broke out! Even for the leaders, for Lenin and Trotsky, it came as a complete surprise. Overnight, as it were, the wretched exiled leaders of all the revolutionary groups, large and small, became world politicians on whom public attention in Europe, America, and Asia was fastened. To this new and unexpected position the revolutionary leaders brought, besides a confused programme which had suddenly become worthless, only the experience of long years of banishment, squabbles in exile, conspiracies, Exes, and secret propaganda. Thus equipped they were expected to rule a great Empire like Russia in the middle of the greatest war in history!

The events of February turned the heads of the most experienced revolutionaries. Not one of them really knew what was going to happen next and how he ought to behave. Even Stalin, the member of the insignificant Bolshevik group, did not know. In his far-away village of Kureika beyond the Arctic Circle, he had made vague plans for the revolution, but they had become obsolete. The fundamental idea, the overthrow of the monarchy, had already been realized, and the next step, the dictatorship of the proletariat, was too vague and indefinite to serve as a slogan for the Bolshevik revolutionary movement. For, after all, the Mensheviks were advocating much the same scheme, and they had secured a long start on the Bolsheviks after the downfall of the old regime. Stalin did not trouble himself at all about the practicability of the Bolshevik programme,

or the Bolshevik slogans. The programme which had constituted the foundation of his whole life could not possibly be bad; only the revolution that did not adopt this programme could be bad! For the time being, however, Stalin could get no reliable information as to whether the Leninist programme was proving practicable or not; for he was busy making his way down Siberian rivers, across steppes, over tundras, and through forests, from his place of banishment to his home in the south.

His goal was the Caucasus whither exiled revolutionaries were daily returning. From Siberia, or from the mountains in its immediate neighbourhood, there emerged old half-forgotten conspirators who had been living in banishment or lurking in some secret lair for years. They were welcomed with open arms by the people and by the new authorities, and hailed as the future rulers of the new State and as members of the legislative assembly. Stalin hurried back to the Caucasus as eagerly as a horse returns to its old familiar stable. But the old stable had been rebuilt and the old door did not open to him! One day, together with a number of other revolutionaries, he alighted from the train on the platform of Tiflis station, and to his consternation received a very cold welcome. A clean sweep had, as it were, been made of the old Bolsheviks, and the Mensheviks, the new rulers of Tiflis, looked with anything but a friendly eye on Comrade Koba, whose exploits they remembered only too well! Stalin strode sullenly through the streets of Tiflis, went to see his mother, who was still a seamstress, contemplated the red flags, the symbols of his revolution, and racked his brains in desperation to discover what he, the Bolshevik, could now do in his native land. The ground shook beneath his feet. Conspiracies, Exes, secret propaganda, all activities in which he was a past-master, and to which he had devoted his whole life, were no longer fashionable. But it was imperative for him to link himself up somehow with the Revolution! Angrily smoking his pipe, he strode through the streets searching for what he wanted, his mind set on finding a solution.

At the corner of Alexander Park, in front of a little dairy, he suddenly heard his name called. He looked up and saw T., the Georgian merchant whom he had so often plundered in the past. "So you are here too!" cried T. "I suppose you're out for pelf again?" Stalin did not like this reminder of his Caucasian deeds of prowess. Somehow he felt they were incompatible with the dignity of a leader in the World Revolution. He managed to conjure up a kind and engaging smile and, taking the worthy merchant by the arm, he led him to the dairy where he bravely ordered two glasses of milk. "My dear friend," he said, "those old days are over! There will be no more plundering now. The people have won their freedom. Now let us be friends!" The merchant looked at him suspiciously. He could not understand a Koba who was not out for plunder!

T. was not the only person who remembered and talked about Koba's past deeds. A certain resolution of the Caucasian revolutionary committee was still in force. Stalin had almost forgotten it, but Comrade Koba was to feel its weight. The new masters diligently set to work to unearth it, and suddenly remembered that nearly ten years previously Stalin had been expelled from the revolutionary parties for robbery; and the obvious conclusions were drawn. Stalin was openly boycotted, and malicious paragraphs appeared in the newspapers warning people against "the criminal elements" in the population who were trying to profit by the Revolution. The little band of Tiflis Bolsheviks, who had been almost obliterated, had but little chance of rallying round the leader who had just returned among them. And only a few days after his arrival Stalin again strode savagely to the station with his pipe between his teeth. The disgrace of those first few days had been more than he could bear; his first enthusiastic impressions of the Revolution had faded; and bitterly disappointed, with a malevolent gleam in his little eyes, he boarded the train and went to Petrograd, the capital of the Revolution, where no one knew anything about antiquated resolutions passed by some insignificant Tiflis Committee! In

Petrograd everybody who so desired was borne aloft on the crest of the revolutionary wave.

At that time Petrograd was like a madhouse. The old idols had been cast down. They had fallen without a struggle or any attempt at self-defence. An insignificant mutiny in the army, skilfully exploited by the politicians, had been enough to sweep away a monarchy established for centuries. In the palace where, only a few months previously, a mysterious *starets* in a monk's frock had ruled the country, there sat the "free Ministers of Russia." Men who a few days before had been feared, all powerful Ministers, generals, governors, and police officials, had been turned into frightened, trembling prisoners, whose one thought was to secure their pensions. The most dreaded man in all Russia, Protopopov, the mad Home Secretary, went to the Duma and accosted Kerensky. "Excuse me," he said, "I am Protopopov, the Home Secretary, and I deliver myself up into the hands of the Revolution!"

Petrograd was quite mad. No one knew whether the Revolution would lead or what was to be done with the freedom which had been desired so long. Order after order was issued, each more fantastic than the last. Capital punishment was abolished, even for deserters, and Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaievich, the symbol of reaction, was reappointed Commander-in-Chief. A few hours later he was deprived of this position and "war to a victorious end" against German reaction was officially proclaimed as being the aim of the Revolution. The delirious, hungry, revolutionary mob was roaring and raving all round the Tauric palace in which the Duma was sitting. In this palace built by the brilliant Prince Potiomkin the Tauric, the lover of Catherine the Great, the representatives of all the revolutionary parties except the Bolshevik were holding an uproarious meeting. The Bolshevik members of the last Duma had been expelled from that assembly at the outbreak of war owing to their anti-war propaganda, and they took no part in the mad, never-to-be-forgotten early days of February. The Duma was seething with ex-

citements; the new bourgeois and revolutionary Ministers were making speeches, receiving the exiles who were now streaming back to Russia, and clinging convulsively to the support of the Entente ambassadors. Petrograd looked as though the inmates of all the lunatic asylums in the country were parading the streets, thirsting for action.

And above the Tauric palace, above the city, above the whole of Russia rose the meteoric figure of the new ruler, the man who had brought about the Revolution and intended to be its leader. Everywhere the fame of Alexander Feodorovich Kerensky was blazed abroad. Russia fell in love with him with all the ardour of an adolescent schoolgirl. This short, stubby man with bristly hair and insignificant features was the ruler of all Tsardom! Soldiers, members of the Duma, bankers, the bourgeoisie, the peasants, and even the Ministers he had overthrown, acclaimed and applauded him. The dethroned Tsar, who was in custody, wrote in his diary, "Kerensky is the only man who can save Russia." The peasants came from their villages to gaze open-mouthed at the new ruler, Kerensky. The whole country hailed him; the whole country was happy! It had found the new idol it wanted. Kerensky moved into the Winter Palace and slept in the Tsar's bedroom.

The February Revolution was a bourgeois revolution, engineered by the bourgeois intelligentsia and inspired by ideas which were the Russian equivalents of the immortal clichés of the French Revolution, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity!" But in this case the slogan was "War to a victorious end!" which was taken up by everybody from the dethroned Tsar to the most disreputable terrorist, Savinkov, the revolutionary Minister for War; and Russia determined to prosecute the war with an enthusiasm she had never shown before. One of the official causes of the Revolution had been the fear that peace negotiations might be opened. The Russian army was eleven millions strong, and eleven million men cheered Kerensky to the echo. The vigorous prosecution of the war became the sacred dogma of the

February Revolution, and anyone who breathed a word against it did so at the peril of his life. The people were ready to tear him to pieces..

It was in this raving, singing, cheering, unrecognizable city of Petrograd full of thoughts of victory, that Stalin arrived after the Caucasian revolutionaries had slammed the door in his face. In a little room in Basseinaya Street he set to work to collect the few Bolsheviks who, in the city itself, in the factories, and in exile, had remained faithful to the Party. He and Kameniev were now the only recognized leaders of the Party, the only men capable of guiding its destinies until the arrival of the mass of Bolshevik exiles. In conjunction with Kameniev, Stalin took over the publication of the *Pravda*, the famous Bolshevik journal, and together they plunged into the revolutionary struggle. But Stalin regarded the conflict as hopeless, and this short period when he was in sole command of the Party does not constitute one of the most creditable chapters of his life.

During the first few weeks of the Revolution, two Governments were in power in Russia, the official provisional Government which Stalin subsequently described as the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie, and the Soviet (Council) of Soldiers and Workers in which the Georgian Mensheviks, Stalin's old enemies, were paramount. Stalin and Kameniev did everything in their power to get the fundamental principles of Leninism accepted. But in vain! They were hissed and laughed to scorn. The Soviet, too, wished to carry on the war to a victorious end. On April 12th, Kameniev laid the first Bolshevik resolution before the All-Russian Soviet. Fifty-seven voted in favour of the resolution, three hundred and twenty-five against it. These figures show how much influence the Bolsheviks exercised before the advent of Lenin.

The policy outlined by Stalin in the *Pravda* was founded on old and obsolete Bolshevik principles which were no longer in keeping with the demands of the times. But neither Stalin nor Kameniev was capable of altering the programme of their own

accord, nor had they any wish to do so. The triumph of the Revolution and the downfall of the Tsar confused the minds of the old Bolsheviks. No new and stirring slogan was found and Stalin's policy followed its dead and alive course midway between theoretical Bolshevism and practical Menshevism. All unconsciously Stalin fell into the use of current Menshevik terms, and his policy became half-hearted. Pacifism, marking time, fear of resolute action, and spiritual dependence on the Mensheviks characterized this period of vacillation, and Trotsky was not far wrong when later on he scornfully reproached him with his "Menshevik attitude" at this time. And yet it would hardly be possible to offer Stalin a more serious insult than to charge him with Menshevik tendencies!

Stalin's bankruptcy in the realm of doctrine was never more in evidence than it was during this period, when he completely lost his head before the world problems with which he was suddenly confronted. Another ten years of schooling was necessary to make him to some extent the equal of the intellectual leaders of the Party in the realm of theory.

From the practical point of view, however, he still showed consummate ability even in these days when he was called upon to shoulder such heavy responsibilities. Time was passing by, revolutionary enthusiasm was abating, and the war was not yet won. Gradually the Bolsheviks began to criticize the new state of affairs, and almost unconsciously groped their way towards an agitation in favour of a "democratic peace." Cries of "Down with the War" were heard and similar phrases began to appear more and more frequently in their speeches. In simple elementary essays, hints were thrown out of a demand for "social changes." Among the soldiers and workers in the capital, there was a visible increase in the number of Bolsheviks, and yet during the first two months of the Revolution the Bolshevik Party remained in the background. The Mensheviks also carried on an energetic campaign of propaganda which was more skilful and successful than Stalin's pathetic efforts to get the old pro-

gramme accepted. In spite of temporary triumphs, the circulation of the *Pravda* declined, and the soldiers, who a little while back had been lending an eager ear to Kameniev, were found cheering Kerensky and the Mensheviks with even greater enthusiasm. It seemed hopeless to continue the struggle. Petrograd was not the Caucasus or Siberia. It contained the cleverest men in Russia, and the war they waged against the simple-minded un-intellectual Bolsheviks, as they called them, was both skilful and untiring.

The spirit of the mad, fantastic city of Petrograd began to paralyse Stalin. This icy capital full of unknown enemies was not to be conquered, and dull Bolshevism to which the gloomy Caucasian had devoted his life seemed doomed to perish. The Bolshevik leaders were in despair. Kerensky's fame increased every hour, and Russia's girlish infatuation was apparently developing into lasting love. In spite of various favourable symptoms, the goal of Bolshevism seemed impossible of attainment in the bourgeois revolution.

One dismal evening, after the leaders had made fruitless speeches in the Soviet and knew for certain that the circulation of the *Pravda* had hopelessly declined, a short telegram was dispatched from the Petrograd Post Office to Lenin in Zurich. "Situation desperate. Bolshevism declining. Further work useless." The message was signed Stalin and Kameniev.

Lenin's reply came on April 16th in the shape of a railway carriage which on that day, after long years of exile, bore Vladimir Lenin, the supreme head of all the Bolsheviks, into the Finland Station in Petrograd. The capital had at that time grown accustomed to the arrival of banished revolutionary leaders, but the reception accorded by Stalin and Kameniev to the Master outshone anything that had yet taken place. Huge crowds assembled outside the station, soldiers, workmen, Bolsheviks, and unemployed; everybody wished to see and hear the hero whose arrival had been so widely advertised. The train rolled in. Stalin and Kameniev received the leader. The crowd cheered dutifully,

for at that time all revolutionaries returning from exile were greeted with cheers. Lenin left the station. At the entrance, surrounded by crowds of people, was an armoured car. He climbed on to the roof of it and shouted the following amazing words to the mob: "Long live the Social Revolution! All power to the Soviets! Rob back what has been robbed from you!"

Like a high-school girl Russia had given her first love to Alexander Kerensky. But the flapper's heart is fickle and adolescent love is ephemeral. And on April 16, 1917, she discovered a new love, and her passion for Kerensky began to wane. The bourgeois revolution to which the ministers and generals had sworn allegiance ended on April 16th and the reign of Bolshevism began. It was the Revolution of Social Equality.

A few days later Lenin's first article appeared in the *Pravda*, and in it he replied to Stalin's despairing telegram. In the article he declared that the February Revolution had been only the first stage in the Russian Revolution, and was to be followed by the war of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. The article concluded with the slogan which led Lenin to victory: "Stop the imperialistic war and start the civil war of the Social Revolution!"

The revolutionary energy which had been accumulating for centuries at last found its proper outlet. While Kerensky created the Revolution, it was Lenin who found its form, and with the latter's arrival Stalin's brief reign of power came to an end. Only for a few days did he make any attempt to resist the Master and the other exiles who were pouring in; then he retired definitely into the background for a long time, and the leadership of the Party was taken over by the intellectuals.

In the face of the crowd of newcomers, Stalin's influence and fame were for the time eclipsed. The man who until that day had been the only great Communist in Russia, the recognized leader and most prominent member of the Caucasian and Russian Party organizations, was suddenly forced to bow his head before the crowd of intellectual exiles who for years had been cut off

from Russia and had been living at various headquarters in Western Europe, almost dependent on Stalin's good graces. And he retired into the background. True, he continued to remain a member of the leading Party organizations and to figure among the Communist Olympians. Nevertheless, according to Trotsky, it was clear to all that this taciturn, unsympathetic man, who was a stranger to the exiles, could be used only for unimportant duties. With his Asiatic antecedents and lack of European culture he belonged to a different world from that of the leading exiles and the new chiefs of the Party who were bound by intimate ties to Europe.

Stalin, who for many years had been accustomed to rule his Activists like an autocrat, and whose nature impelled him to leadership, regarded this sudden change in the situation as an unmerited rebuff. He felt as a clerk of some great commercial firm might feel when a new manager suddenly takes it into his head to make life difficult for him. But he was much too old and experienced a Bolshevik to allow himself to be tempted to insubordination. He was forced into the background merely because the seniors in the Party had taken up their rightful positions. To Lenin he rendered unquestioning obedience. But deep down in the depths of his simple Caucasian soul he was filled with a primitive loathing for the distinguished exiles who had spent most of their lives in mutual quarrels and recriminations in Paris, Geneva, and elsewhere, while their less distinguished comrades were tramping the endless highways of Siberia.

And lo! these exiles were now emerging from their aristocratic places of exile, places which to the genuine Caucasian would for ever remain a mystery, and taking over the leadership of the Revolution, probably scoffing in their hearts at the rough, uncouth figure and Caucasian manners of Comrade Koba! Though Stalin could not fail to feel all this, he never showed it. Outwardly and to some extent also inwardly, he remained what he had always been, a taciturn functionary and unquestioning executor of Lenin's ideas. As we have seen, after the first few

days of resistance, he came to accept the Master's orders wholeheartedly, and his self-abnegation was rewarded by the latter's unbounded confidence. At this period Stalin apparently gave up entirely his position of leader of the Party in Russia and was content with being a member of the Central Committee, which was, it is true, by no means a fictitious office, but one of the highest the Party had to bestow. He held his tongue, smoked his pipe, endorsed Lenin's resolutions, and became engrossed in the arduous activities which the Party demanded of all its leaders. He threw himself heart and soul into quiet, unostentatious work, and as editor of the Communist journals, as a constant but taciturn member of every assembly, he waited silently, burning with impatience for events to take their course.

Stalin later described this period which, though it made no spectacular display, was yet fraught with heavy responsibilities, in his simple unpolished Communist phraseology. "The most amazing changes in the history of the Party were taking place," he wrote. "The old pre-Revolutionary programme which provided for a direct overthrow of the Government was quite clear and sound, but it no longer suited the conditions of the fight. At that time it was impossible merely to work for the overthrow of the Government, for it was inextricably bound up with the Soviets, which were under the influence of those who wished to prolong the war. To carry out this part of its programme, the Party would have had to wage, both against the Government and the Soviets, a war which would have proved beyond its strength. On the other hand, it was impossible to pursue any policy calculated to support the provisional Government, because it was imperialistic. A new orientation of the Party was necessary to deal with the new conditions, and the majority of the members tried to feel their way towards accepting it. They used the Soviets to bring pressure to bear on the provisional Government, but they could not make up their minds to take the step of abandoning the old aim, the dictatorship of the proletariat, for the new solution which was the seizure of power by means of the Soviets.

Their half-hearted action was supported by the idea that it would give the Soviets time to see through the obvious imperialism of the provisional Government in its dealings with current events and in the rest of its policy, and thus to alienate them from it. But it was a mistake! It encouraged pacifist illusions and rendered the revolutionary education of the masses more difficult. With the other members of the Party, I too adopted this erroneous attitude, and it was only in the middle of April, when I accepted Lenin's principles, that I abandoned it. The Party was in need of a fresh orientation, and this Lenin gave it. Did disputes arise between the Party and Lenin? Yes! How long did they last? Two weeks!"

These few sentences are all that Stalin has ever written about the pre-Leninian policy of the Party which was also his own. He regarded any further explanation as superfluous. By way of apology he merely added the following tolerant remark. "Our Party would have constituted a caste and not a revolutionary party, if it had not admitted into its ranks men of varying shades of opinion. Varying shades of opinion had existed in the Party before, but they had not destroyed its unity. How came it that in spite of them the Party did not split up? The explanation is to be found in the fact that the old comrades stood firmly united on the common basis of Bolshevism."

Nevertheless Stalin subsequently contrived to do away with varying shades of opinion among his old comrades with an iron hand, no matter how firmly they too stood united on the common basis of Bolshevism! But this took place ten years later. At that time, in April 1917, both the Party and Stalin had other preoccupations. Varying shades of opinion could be tolerated for the sake of the common aim which united the Bolsheviks—the seizure of power. The events of the gradual advance towards this goal, during which Stalin was first a simple official and subsequently an energetic leader, must now be described even though they may not be immediately connected with his career.

THE WAY TO THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

“THE WAY TO THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION” IS THE TITLE GIVEN BY Stalin to a collection of his essays, speeches, and articles written and delivered between February and March 1917. In the preface he describes the tactics of the October Revolution, the methodical isolation of the non-Communist parties, the way in which the temporary mood of the workers and peasants was turned to account, and the importance of Lenin’s slogans, which were as simple as they were brutal. In this preface the way to the October Revolution appears as a methodical and gradual advance on the part of Lenin. From start to finish everything was carefully thought out and arranged.

The Government had postponed dealing with the demands of the masses until the meeting of the Legislative Assembly, but Lenin promised to fulfil these demands at once. The Army was sick to death of the war. Lenin promised peace. The people demanded the convocation of the Legislative Assembly, and Lenin complied in order to show the people its futility and to disperse it. Only at one point in this fine edifice of theoretical conspiracy does an open confession emerge. “The importance of the Party,” writes Stalin, “lay in the fact that it moulded the elementary forces of the raging masses into the shape of Bolshevik ideology.”

This, of course, simply means that the Party adapted itself to the elementary forces in question, identified itself practically with them, and achieved victory through the triumph of the frenzied mob. Above all the theoretical problems and abstract discussions, one fundamental principle prevailed—the exploita-

tion of the extraordinary and unexpected concatenation of lucky circumstances such as the War, the Revolution, and famine, which was bound to have the effect of driving the masses into the path of extreme radicalism. Lenin's slogan "Lower the plane of Revolution!" was to all intents and purposes an approximation to the aims of the frenzied masses who had nothing resembling a programme.

It would be waste of time to describe the events of this period which are now matters of common knowledge—the sitting of the Bolshevik congresses, the appearance of Lenin at the Peasants' Congress, the Bolsheviks' new agrarian programme, the first All-Russian Soviet Congress, and the open preparations for the first June insurrection. As editor of the *Pravda* and member of the Central Committee, Stalin also played a part in these activities, though they did not bring him much to the fore. At the assemblies and meetings of the Committee, he never spoke, and it was only at the first public congress of the Party at the end of April that he came forward with a short speech of praise for Lenin's principles, and also gave an exhaustive though false account of Nationalist problems in which among other things he recognized the right of the various peoples of Russia to separate themselves from the State. The members of the Bolshevik Party, the revolutionary leaders and fighters, were finding their position far from easy. The seizure of power, which Lenin had prophesied, seemed even to the most radical members of the Party an unattainable ideal. The old discipline of the Party forced everybody to lend a helping hand, but in their heart of hearts even the supreme leaders, even Lenin himself, doubted whether the permanent retention of power would ever be possible. The only man who never doubted was Stalin. Behind his low brow there was no room for doubt. Lenin had announced the forthcoming dictatorship of the Party, consequently the dictatorship must be realized. The god of the Party could not err! Any who doubted the truth of his prophecy could not be real Communists or disciplined fighters. All who at this period came into touch with

Stalin were impressed by his fanatical, almost mystic faith in coming victory. He never argued, never attempted to convince, but if he were asked, he would reply with profound and unshakable conviction, "We shall one day be in power!"

Shortly after Lenin's arrival, Stalin met an old prison mate, the Menshevik, Vereshchak, at one of the Soviet meetings. Verezhchak had just returned from exile and when he heard what the new Bolshevik programme was he poured out a torrent of reproaches on the head of his old colleague, Stalin. "You are destroying the Revolution!" he exclaimed. "You are striving after dictatorship! You are opposed to the war!"

Stalin listened compassionately as one listens to an ignorant child. "Listen!" he said with a smile. "We shall certainly attain to power. Nothing can stop us. You had far better become a Bolshevik too while there is yet time. A few months hence I shall only be able to employ you as my footman, and even that I shall do merely for old acquaintance' sake." The worthy Menshevik was both indignant and shaken. There was something demoniacal in Stalin's firm faith though it seemed to be founded on air. The revolutionary parties in Russia had good reason for regarding his conviction at this time as a form of harmless lunacy. In spite of Lenin's arrival and the new programme, the Bolsheviks were far from being in a strong position. The circulation of the *Pravda* left much to be desired. As late as June, shortly before the first insurrection, Lenin appeared before the first Peasants' Congress and his agrarian policy was rejected root and branch. "We shall seize the reins of power!" he declared, in spite of this rebuff. The assembled people replied not with indignant speeches, resolutions, or protests but with roars of laughter. The possibility of the Bolsheviks really coming into power at that time seemed utterly fantastic.

The truculent spirit of the revolutionary parties and the enthusiasm the Revolution still inspired did not lead anybody to regard a Bolshevik rising as a possibility. To all appearances power was still on the side of the Government. As a matter of

fact it belonged to nobody. The power over the great Russian Empire which the Tsar had just allowed to slip from his feeble hands, was lying on the streets of Petrograd for anybody to pick up! Officially it belonged to the provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet, and these two bodies waged a bitter and fruitless war for the exercise of it. They were connected by the "Liaison Commission" which was supposed to regulate the relations between the two but found itself unable to do so. True, the Government still continued to issue orders and to pass laws and regulations, but there was no longer any certainty that they would be obeyed. The first prerequisite of Government, which consists in the power to enforce obedience, was entirely lacking. There was no longer any executive authority. If a law was obeyed it was obeyed voluntarily. The people were interested only in laws which they wished to obey. The power, the real power, lay in the hands of the soldiers who were sauntering idly about the streets, and who for the life of them did not know what to do with it. From time to time they would receive orders from the Government which were frequently at variance with orders they had received from the Soviet, while orders from the Soviet were often incompatible with the dictates of the "revolutionary conscience," which in the shape of ragged street-corner agitators making mad speeches soon came to be recognized as the supreme and ideal authority. As a matter of fact everybody did just as he chose, for there was no such thing as punishment. Plundering, gambling, and drinking increased to an alarming degree. Soldiers pushed generals and ministers off the pavement, and Lenin rubbed his hands with glee. The revolutionary spirit was obviously growing! For instance, without fear of consequences, he himself moved with his staff into the palace belonging to the dancer Kshezinskaya, and thus violated all the traditional concepts regarding the right of private property. In the old days a few policemen would have been sent to arrest him and there the matter would have ended, but now the provisional Government was not even able to show this modest sign of



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strength. Its only strength lay in Kerensky's powers of persuasion, but for all the effect his arguments had on Lenin, he might have spared himself the pains. The interminable controversy over the dancer's palace constitutes almost the only humorous interlude on the eve of the downfall of a whole world.

Yet in spite of all, the old Russia still survived. The trains though unpunctual were still running, the telephone was working, electric light was still available, and foodstuffs still arrived in Petrograd. The old administrative machine, established for centuries, worked automatically though not quite so smoothly as of yore, and the State still gave signs of life. This ability to continue vegetating, which was partly habit and partly the result of the huge doses of eloquence poured out by Kerensky every day, was ascribed to the revolutionary passion that, it was claimed, had taken possession of the people. But the only sign of revolutionary passion was to be found in the interminable and ridiculous speeches made by illiterate soldiers in which they tried to give expression to their vague inchoate sentiments. Revolutionary Russia had become garrulous Russia and the Revolution became incarnate in speechifying without end! The powers of the various groups were tested. The old revolutionaries who during their long years of banishment had gradually forgotten the Party programme, could now break fresh ground, and once more the rank and file of the Party were to be put to the test, and for the last time. The problem with which the Russian Revolution was faced and which brought about its downfall was the War. An attempt was made to combine the War with the Revolution, although the former was obviously the heritage of Tsarist days. They were opposites which could not be reconciled, and yet their reconciliation constituted the official programme of the Revolutionary Government. Revolution and war to a victorious end was the aim of every party from the bourgeoisie and the constitutional democrats down to the Social-Revolutionaries.

The Bolsheviks alone pursued a different path. They alone

saw their way clearly in the troubled waters, and knew that the mutinous revolts among the soldiers which started the Revolution could end only in a class war for power. "You have sucked our blood, now we shall suck yours," was the mighty cry shouted through the streets of Petrograd. The Bolsheviks now spread it far and wide, and it met with ever-growing response. With unflinching determination they marched on their way to power, though secretly they doubted whether they would succeed.

There were only two men who did not doubt—Lenin and his factotum Stalin.

The tactics adopted for preparing the way to the October Revolution have been described by Stalin himself. "The Revolutions of '48 and '70 failed because the peasants were on the side of the bourgeoisie. The October Revolution was victorious because it contrived to win the peasant reserves over to the side of the proletariat. Those who are unable to grasp this fact can never understand the true nature of the October Revolution." Stalin, however, does not mention the fact that the winning over of the peasants involved abandoning the Bolshevik agrarian programme. But we know Lenin's famous speech which began with the words: "Our agrarian programme is worthless!"

Even Stalin knew that only a concatenation of a host of happy circumstances made a proletarian revolution possible in an agricultural country. In his book, *The Way to the October Revolution*, he writes: "Three external circumstances made the victory of the proletarian revolution possible. First, the fact that it opened in the middle of a desperate conflict between the two great imperialistic groups consisting of England and France on the one hand and Germany and Austria on the other. Preoccupied by this war to the death, these groups could not pay any attention to the October Revolution. Secondly, owing to the fact that the October Revolution occurred in a country waging an imperialistic war, the working masses were forced to a proletarian revolution as providing the only means of escape. Thirdly, the fact that the War had created a revolutionary spirit in Eu-

rope. These are the three external circumstances. But in addition various internal circumstances combined to promote the Revolution. First, the fact that it was supported by the working classes. Secondly, that it was supported by the war-weary soldiers. Thirdly, that it was led by a Party, the Bolsheviks, which owed its strength not only to its experience and discipline but also to its connexion with the working masses. Fourthly, because the opponents of the October Revolution could easily be identified, consisting as they did of more or less feeble Russian bourgeoisie, landowners utterly demoralized by peasant risings, and Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries rendered completely bankrupt by their support of the War. Fifthly, the leaders of the October Revolution had at their disposal huge districts of a young state, where they could manœuvre as they chose. Sixthly, in their fight with the enemy the leaders of the October Revolution had at their disposal adequate supplies of raw material, foodstuffs, etc."

Such was the sober, almost mathematical precision with which Stalin replied to the oft-debated question regarding the causes of the October Revolution.

To the question why the Bolsheviks became the leaders of the insurgent masses, Stalin replies in the same place as follows: "The Bolsheviks became the leaders of the October Revolution, first because in their struggle they relied upon the elemental power of the masses, secondly because by so doing they remained throughout the sole leaders of the movement. Thirdly, their leadership enabled them to create a political army which led the October Revolution to a successful issue," etc., etc.

Even the tactics of the conspiracy have been clearly described by Stalin. The first prerequisite was the separation of the working masses from the other socialistic parties. The mistakes of the Social-Democrats and the Social-Revolutionaries were skilfully and demagogically exploited. These parties had postponed the fulfilment of their programme until the meeting of the Legislative Assembly. The Bolsheviks therefore declared that they had

abandoned their programme and were betraying the people. This done, they began to storm the Soviets in which the Social-Revolutionaries and the Social-Democrats had hitherto played a leading part. In Lenin's opinion the Soviets, that is to say, the Councils of Soldiers and Workmen, were the most powerful instruments available for the Revolution. The Soviets, the original object of which had been to mobilize the masses, were now made the executive as well as the legislative power in the new State. True, until July this new apparatus of Government had been in the hands of the Mensheviks. It was only after the Kornilov insurrection that the Bolsheviks proclaimed the treachery of the Mensheviks and finally succeeded in Bolshevikizing the Soviets. The slogan "All power to the Soviets" now amounted not merely to a demagogic confusion of thought but also to a practical striving towards power. In the same book Stalin writes, "The incalculable importance of the tactics which consisted in the conversion of the Soviets into organs of political power lies in the fact that the millions of workers were thus separated from the Mensheviks and Social-Democrats and led directly to dictatorship." As the last stage in the Communist tactics, Stalin points to Lenin's ability to lead the masses forward with Bolshevik slogans without allowing them to see that they were not leading but being led. "Our peculiar merit lay in the fact that we never confused the leadership of the Party with the leadership of the people, and that consequently we not only controlled the Party but also discovered the science of how to lead the masses, the workers!" This assertion, which Stalin supports by numerous examples, reveals much more about the essence of Bolshevism than do volumes of contemporary memoirs and narratives.

Stalin's book, *The Way to the October Revolution*, was published in 1925 by way of an attack on Trotsky, who treated it with a contemptuous smile. "It is full of the most puerile errors," wrote the wily intellectual Communist. Yet with military brevity and mathematical precision it describes the way to the October Revolution in a manner which only a bigoted ad-

herent of the Party could have done. A comparison of Trotsky's reminiscences of the October Revolution with Stalin's book brings out better than anything else can the fundamental difference between Stalin's precise, abstract Asiatic Bolshevism and Trotsky's intellectual Communism.

Nevertheless, it is doubtful whether in those March days the way to the October Revolution seemed as clear to Stalin as he would have us believe. In retrospect even the progress of a revolution may assume a logical sequence. But at first the leaders could only allow themselves to be borne along on the crest of the revolutionary flood without really knowing what was happening or likely to happen. Meanwhile the breakers of revolution were rising ever higher and higher, and the days of July were approaching.

THE JULY INSURRECTION

AT THE EDITORIAL OFFICES OF THE "PRAVDA" IN BASSEINAYA Street people were constantly going in and out. In a dark corner sat the editor, Comrade K. Stalin (the letter K was all that remained of the Caucasian Activist, Koba), and received the old and new comrades who wished to see him. The Party was growing in numbers daily. Communistic resolutions had already been passed in the factories, and among the garrison troops there were whole regiments ready to support the Soviets against the Government. But the Soviets themselves were not yet by any means sufficiently permeated with Bolshevism.

Stalin paced up and down the room with long rapid strides. The article he had begun was not yet finished and he was not in the mood to finish it. He picked up the Menshevik journal and crushed it with rage. Once again the workers had cheered Tsereteli, the Menshevik. The Mingrelians were a caustic race, thought Stalin, and he hated the Georgian Menshevik, the distinguished Mingrelian prince, Tsereteli. Savagely he called to mind the last sitting of the Soviets in the Tsarina Marie's Palace: All the members of the provisional Government had been present and had discussed the possibility of establishing friendly relations with the Soviets. "Peaceful relations, compromises!" laughed Stalin scornfully. "Now that we have Lenin's principles we no longer require peaceful relations!" In the Tsarina Marie's Palace the Ministers had laid stress on the need for discipline, of prosecuting the war to a victorious end, and of loyalty to the Entente.

At last Tsereteli, the Georgian, had spoken. "The democracy will do all in its power to support the provisional Government," he declared emphatically amid loud applause.

When Kameniev followed and spoke of the class war, he was hissed down. Stalin took his seat at the table. Somewhere the rotary presses were waiting for his article. Somewhere Lenin was discussing plans for a great demonstration. Stalin took a large Finnish dagger from his pocket and in clumsy fashion began to sharpen a pencil. The great demonstration arranged for June 17th had been organized by the Soviets. On that day all the Socialist parties, the Mensheviks, the "League," the "Party of Unity," the Social-Revolutionaries, the "Plekhanovs," and the Bolsheviks were to gather in the streets of Petrograd and publicly declare their attitude towards the offensive which Kerensky had agreed to make as a concession to the Western Powers.

On the 16th Stalin was sharpening his pencil. In obedience to Lenin's orders, he was to draw up the Party manifesto for the *Pravda*. It was to be addressed to all the soldiers and workers in Petrograd. Various comrades were sitting about the room and clouds of cigarette smoke rose to the ceiling. "The Council of State which provided the *Tsar* with his best hangmen," wrote Stalin, "is at this very moment drawing a treacherous noose. For what purpose? To throw it at the right moment round the neck of the working classes to the unbounded delight of the Entente." Lenin knew what he was doing when he entrusted Stalin with the task of drawing up the Bolshevik manifesto. In their objective simplicity, Stalin's mentality and mode of expression were those of the illiterate masses of the suburbs. The sentence about the noose and the hangman made a furore. Stalin went on writing and all round him the comrades continued to smoke. The compositor was leaning against the wall waiting. "Hurry up, Comrade Stalin!" he said. In huge letters Stalin closed his manifesto with the following slogans which the workers were expected to inscribe on their banners on the day of the demonstration. They were devised by Stalin and signed by Lenin.

“Down with the war! Down with the Ministers! Down with the offensive! Down with the counter-revolution! Down with the Duma!” A whole series of splendid “Downs!” followed and on the next day adorned the banners of the demonstrators. The demonstration was a success. Stalin’s slogans took possession of the city. The breach between the Bolsheviks and the other revolutionary parties became self-evident. That night people in Petrograd were already openly discussing the Bolshevik conspiracy against the Revolution, and on the evening of the 18th the event was celebrated with feasting at Lenin’s headquarters in Kshezinskaya’s palace. The proletariat of Petrograd had that day pronounced against the Mensheviks. The Mingrelian Tsereteli was beaten!

After June 18th, rumours began to circulate more and more persistently in the streets of the capital, in the Government palaces, and in the foreign embassies, to the effect that the Bolsheviks were hatching a conspiracy financed by German gold, and the Press with pedantic accuracy even published figures and details. The fact that the Germans had helped Lenin to return to Russia and that he had immediately set to work to incite the people against the war, did indeed lend colour to the suspicion that the whole Bolshevik movement was nothing more than a master stroke on the part of the German Secret Service. These charges did not fail to rouse the Bolsheviks who were filled with indignation. Trotsky, who was accused of having received a million dollars in America from the Germans, wrote whole volumes in self-defence. He bombarded the Ministers and Embassies with hysterical letters of protest but only succeeded in being accused of treachery by the whole of bourgeois Russia. Suddenly moved by a bourgeois sense of honour Lenin and all the other leading Bolsheviks followed his example. Stalin alone took no active part in this dispute. Once only when he was questioned point-blank on the subject of German gold did he deign to reply. “In Germany,” he said in his indolent, phlegmatic way, “they say

that Liebknecht is a Russian agent; here they say the same about us. It is all capitalistic spite!"

As a matter of fact he did not care a straw about this question concerning the origin of Bolshevik funds. For he had been accustomed to raise money in a very different way. Even if the Bolsheviks had accepted German money—and, as everyone knows, the question has never been satisfactorily settled—he would not of course have felt any cause for indignation. He does not suffer from middle-class virtues! He knew, moreover, from the history of revolutions, that the Social-Revolutionaries, who were now carrying on such a bitter struggle against the German Secret Service, had for their part, not been ashamed to accept money from the Japanese during the Russo-Japanese War. All this fuss about Party funds and the indignation of the exiles was beyond his comprehension, and he only participated in the fight for tactical reasons. The charge that the Bolsheviks were openly conspiring against the provisional Government was far more serious in his eyes. At every meeting and in his journals he swore by all his gods that the Bolsheviks were not doing anything of the kind; all that was happening was that the masses were growing impatient for the settlement of their just claims. That the attitude of the masses should quite by chance happen to coincide with the Bolshevik programme was not the fault of the Party!

This, of course, was deliberate prevarication, and old Tsere-teli was quite right when, in his famous speech of June 11th, he declared that the Bolsheviks had ceased to be a Party of ideas and had developed into nothing more than conspirators against the Revolution.

Meanwhile the capital was growing ever more and more uneasy. At night, when Stalin repaired to his lodgings, he saw suspicious-looking individuals standing about the street corners, who took sinister stock of him and then allowed him to pass. He knew exactly what they were up to. If instead of his shabby mili-

tary tunic, he had been wearing a respectable overcoat, he would not have been able to escape without a fight or bloodshed, for the power, the real power, in the streets of Petrograd was shared between habitual thieves and robbers and the soldiers who had been Bolshevikized. Even Lenin was not spared by the marauders. During a conference at which he passionately advocated the abolition of private property, his fur coat was stolen by one of his enthusiastic listeners! His huge frame and muscular appearance led the thieves to fight shy of Stalin, though, as a matter of fact, there was not much they could have taken from him—a worn tunic, shabby boots, a leather belt, and a pair of private's trousers constituted his chief possessions, and with them he went right through the Revolution. The only objects that might have tempted the robbers were the new and carefully tended pistols which he kept in his pockets. It is said—and the rumour is quite credible—that he was twice attacked by bandits in the streets of Petrograd. On the first occasion, when a number of dark figures crept up to him and demanded to search his pockets, he answered by such a torrent of genuine proletarian abuse and curses that they immediately took him to be one of themselves and retired. On the second occasion he was saved by his heavy Georgian fists. But these little interludes delighted him immensely. They proved to him that old Russia was at last crumbling away in disorder.

The city grew more and more restless from day to day. Shots could be heard in the night, and the inhabitants were disturbed by sudden alarms now close at hand, now at a distance. Piercing shrieks were heard from victims of robbery or murder. Armed soldiers reeled drunk through the streets, swearing to die for the Revolution, and meanwhile plundering the passers-by. Depressing news came from the Front. The offensive had failed! The soldiers were fraternizing with the enemy! Delegations of wild and disorderly soldiers, sailors, and workers appeared before the Soviet demanding that it should seize the reins of power. From time to time bodies of troops would mutiny, while the Bolsheviks

viks continued to make ever more open preparations for their insurrection. The faces of the Menshevik leaders of the Soviet, Chkhheidze, Tsereteli, Dan, and Gotz, grew longer and longer.

At last July 3rd arrived, the day of doom for the Russian Revolution, on which Lenin's well-prepared insurrection burst out. On this day, under pressure from the populace, the non-Socialistic Ministers resigned, and Lenin resolved to turn the opportunity to account for a public rising. Two representatives of a strongly Bolshevikized machine-gun detachment forced their way into a meeting of the Bolshevik Conference on July 3rd, and demanded that the conference should lead the insurrection planned by the detachment. The Conference, with Stalin at its head, demurred. The responsibility was great and in case of failure the Bolsheviks would be exposed to the vengeance of the Government parties. But while the negotiations were still in progress, the insurrection broke out, and under the leadership of the machine-gun detachment, which sent its representatives into the factories, the armed workers poured out into the streets. The slogan of the insurrection was "All power to the Soviets! Down with the offensive!"

Meanwhile the negotiations between the soldiers and the Bolsheviks continued. In order to escape responsibility, the Bolsheviks wished to intervene only after the first shots had been fired. At five o'clock, Stalin rose to his feet and declared officially, in the name of the Central Committee, that the Party would not undertake the leadership of the insurrection. His speech lasted only a few minutes and before it was finished shots were heard in the street. The insurrection had begun!

In obedience to a sign from Stalin, who was still speaking against the insurrection, two comrades, who had been specially selected beforehand, quickly left the room to take over the leadership of the rising. Stalin's speech was placed on the records notwithstanding. "To accuse us of having organized the insurrection is a lie," Stalin afterwards declared with reference to this speech, "worthy of the base slanderers who uttered it." He was

perfectly well aware that nothing could have been more remote from the truth, for on that very day he had declared inside the Party, "We shall march with the masses, even if they lead God knows where!"

Thus did the first Bolshevik insurrection of July break out and thus did civil war develop out of the Revolution. For the first time since the overthrow of the Tsar the streets of Petrograd were red with the blood of revolutionaries. That night the Central Committee posted its sentries and issued its ultimatum: "All power to the Soviets!" for which four hundred thousand soldiers and workmen were to fight. Those who were most terrified by it were the members of the Soviet themselves, the majority of whom were still anti-Bolshevik. On July 4th, the Bolsheviks were officially declared by the Soviet to be the betrayers of the Revolution, and the only troops that remained loyal to the Government, the Volhynia Regiment, were thrown into the struggle. Street fighting lasted all through the night, and on July 5th martial law was proclaimed in Petrograd and the insurrection was stamped out. Bodies of troops summoned from the Front established order, and peace negotiations were opened between the Soviets and the Bolsheviks, after which those troops which were loyal to the Bolsheviks left the city.

On the morning of the 5th, the vanquished Bolshevik leaders met together. "Now we shall be shot one after the other," observed Lenin to Trotsky. "This is the most favourable opportunity they will get." But Lenin overestimated his opponents. The plain honest revolutionaries, the Mensheviks, the Social-Revolutionaries, and their like, were incapable of taking energetic measures against their colleagues of yesterday. In spite of the open insurrection, not a single Bolshevik was shot, and even those who were arrested were soon released. True, a warrant for Lenin's arrest was issued, but he was given time to go into hiding, and as for the rest, it was decided to punish the Bolsheviks with contempt. They were the last to expect this treatment from their victorious foes, and at first panic reigned in their camp.

After prolonged negotiations, however, the Government did at last resolve to offer some resistance to the Bolshevik Party, but the steps they took were confined to forbidding the publication of the *Pravda*, issuing a few warrants of arrest, clearing out the palace of Kshezinskaya, the dancer, and inaugurating a press campaign against the iniquitous disturbers of the peace. But the Party itself was not suppressed nor was it driven out of the Tauric Palace, where its Central Committee still held its sittings, and only a few days after the insurrection both Trotsky and Stalin were able to inveigh against the Government in speeches and in newly founded journals. They both expressed the utmost indignation against what they termed the brutal measures of the Government. Had not the Government actually dared to issue a warrant for the arrest of that innocent little lamb, Lenin!

On July 11th, Stalin wrote in *The Worker and the Soldier*, a newspaper that had just been founded: "Instead of stretching out a hand to us and fighting side by side with us against the nationalistic, imperialistic bourgeoisie, and thus saving the Revolution, they (the Mensheviks) have entered into alliance with the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie; they have turned their weapons against the demonstrators, and incited the Junkers and the Cossacks against the workers!"

"By so doing they have betrayed the Revolution and made smooth the path for counter-revolution.

"And there arose from the cesspools of life a sea of filth which poured over everything upright and honourable. House-searchings, summary evacuations, arrests, floggings, torturing and death, the suppression of newspapers and organizations, the disarming of the workers and of whole regiments, the abolition of liberties, the reintroduction of capital punishment, lying and unclean slandering, all this has been done with the approval of the Social-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, and constitutes the first steps to counter-revolution. Never before have the representatives of democracy behaved in such an undignified man-

ner as they have during these historic days. Never before have they sunk to such depths of ignominy!

“At the present moment hired mercenaries and cowardly slanderers openly dare to charge the leaders of our Party with treachery. Those bandits of the pen from the bourgeois Press besmirch their papers with these charges, and the so-called Public Prosecutor’s office is not ashamed to publish anything and everything against Lenin.

“Wretched crowd! They know not that the names of our leaders have never been so near and dear to the working classes as they are today when the bourgeois mob, waxing impudent, is flinging mud at them!”

As the reader will see, Stalin can wax eloquent when he likes, although the fact that his article about the bourgeois mob could be published proves that the bourgeois Terror was not so dreadful as he made it out to be. What a real reign of terror was, Stalin himself was the first to show. But history was repeating itself and events pursued the same course as they had done in the Caucasus in 1908, when the Mensheviks censured Stalin for his *Exes*, and he turned the tables and arraigned them on the same charge. He now acted in a similar manner on a grander scale and passionately condemned the Mensheviks.

Nevertheless, the events of July 5th constituted a severe blow to the Bolsheviks. Facts published by the General Staff proved beyond all doubt that Lenin was a German spy. The bad news from the Front led everyone to infer that the Government proposed to take drastic measures against the Bolsheviks. Confusion reigned in the Bolshevik ranks. Lenin had fled and many of the leaders were in custody, while numbers of Bolsheviks, who afterwards became prominent, suddenly declared that they would have nothing more to do with the Party, among them being even the acknowledged idols Gorki, Krassin, and Lunacharsky. The slightest pressure brought to bear by the provisional Government at this juncture would have sufficed

to annihilate the Bolsheviks altogether, but it was not applied. The Government contented itself with moral censure. Trotsky afterwards described the effect this censure had on the intellectuals of the Party. "In those days we all had to show a good deal of self-control not to hurry through the corridors and rooms of the Tauric Palace with backs bent and heads bowed, running the gauntlet of eyes full of hatred, of angry whispers, nudges, cries of 'Look! Look!' and open grinding of teeth. The path to the canteen of the Executive Committee was a miniature Golgotha!"

Stalin of course felt nothing of the sort. He did not find the way to the canteen through the angry looks of his enemies particularly arduous, more especially as meat, cabbage soup, and black bread and butter sandwiches with cheese were served there to the Bolsheviks as well as to everybody else, and Private Grafov, who was in charge, always put aside particularly succulent portions for the poor, hungry Bolsheviks!

Owing to the unprecedented mildness of the provisional Government, the Bolshevik conspiracy was not ended by its defeat. In the Tauric Palace, the headquarters of the revolutionary parties, Trotsky, at the invitation of the Bolshevik group, delivered a speech in which he assured those present that, "After this crisis the Bolsheviks expected to advance rapidly and that the masses, having seen our fidelity proved by deeds, would cling to us ever more closely."

Only eleven days after the abortive insurrection Stalin was able to convene a special sitting of the Petrograd Bolsheviks, at which he made a long speech outlining the programme of the Party. He pointed out with satisfaction that the ordinary revolution was finished and done with, that the social revolution was now beginning, and bitterly deplored the fact that the employees and compositors of the *Pravda* which had been suppressed would now have to be paid thirty thousand roubles for nothing! He regarded this as a proof of the baseness of the bourgeois

parties, and concluded with the assurance that the July insurrection had been subdued only because the Bolsheviks, for tactical reasons, had wished it to be subdued.

On July 26th the sixth Bolshevik Congress met, before which, at the request of the Central Committee, Stalin read the political report. It contained, among other things, the extraordinary statement that Lenin and Zinoviev, against whom warrants had been issued, had refrained from allowing themselves to be arrested only because nobody knew who actually held the reins of power at the time. Stalin closed this report also with the words: "The peaceful stages of the Revolution are now over, and we are entering upon the era of civil war!" The assembled Bolsheviks were filled with enthusiasm, and everywhere, on the streets, in the factories, among the workmen and the soldiers, Stalin's slogan, "Bread, freedom, peace!" was exhibited afresh. These three words soon dominated the streets of Petrograd.

Meanwhile, events crowded thick and fast upon one another. After the failure of the offensive at the Front and the meeting of the Government conference in Moscow, a coalition of all the non-Bolshevik parties was formed under Kerensky's leadership, and a Government set up for saving the Revolution. In it the Socialists and the bourgeoisie made common cause against the Bolsheviks. The Right now also organized their rising and an attempt to save Russia was made by the generals. General Kornilov, the Commander-in-Chief, advanced against the capital with native Caucasian troops, for it was felt that a dictatorship of generals would save Russia.

And it was in the midst of this chaos of Bolshevik conspiracies, offensives undertaken by his own generals, hunger, treachery, and wild outbursts of enthusiasm that the struggle was continued by the Social-Democrat, Alexander Kerensky, who was Premier, Minister for War, Naval Minister, Minister of Justice, and Home Secretary all rolled into one, in fact the embodiment of the February Revolution. He fought against his own ministers,



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**LENIN HARANGUING A CROWD
TROTSKY STANDS BELOW THE PLATFORM**

against his own generals, against Bolshevik demagogic, against treachery and Nemesis, using only the honourable weapons of the intellectual—persuasion, explanations, and appeals to reason. He still believed that in this Russian State which was tumbling to pieces about his ears, the dictates of reason must play the determining part! “Save the Revolution! Save the Revolution!” he cried above the heads of the riotous throng left and right of him, and he shrieked the words with the last remaining strength of a doomed man. In the streets and squares of Petrograd his cry was met by Stalin’s three short words: “Bread, peace, freedom!” And at the sound of them he recoiled. “Save the Revolution!—Bread, peace, freedom!” The one excluded the other. The people of Petrograd and the disorganized soldiery believed that the Bolsheviks really had it in their power to give them bread and peace. “Save Russia!” yelled Kornilov. “Save the Revolution!” cried Kerensky, quite hysterically. “Bread, peace, freedom!” roared the mob; and above the mob, above the roaring, raving, murderous, starving people of Petrograd hovered Lenin’s slanting Mongolian eyes, Trotsky’s demoniacal pointed beard, and in the background Stalin’s cynical, smiling face with its cruel, predatory Caucasian eyes! Old Russia was doomed!

Not far from Petrograd near a primitive little village, and in the middle of a rain-sodden field stood a small tent in which sat a bald-headed man with slanting Mongolian eyes and high Tatar cheekbones. He was writing, reading, and hatching dark plans. It was Lenin, hiding in this tent from those who were trying to arrest him. He smiled complacently. At night the veteran Activist who was responsible for keeping him in touch with the Party would come to him. This duty had been entrusted to Stalin. At the moment of greatest danger, when Bolshevism might have been extinguished for ever at one blow, when Trotsky was in custody in Kresty Prison, Lenin turned to Stalin. He entirely trusted the Georgian’s gifts for conspiracy and he was not mistaken. Nobody knew the way from Basseinaya Street

to Lenin except Stalin, and he took care that the Party reins should not slip from the hands of the leader even in the days of his absence.

In the dirty little tent during the bitter northern nights, Stalin would receive the Master's orders, and in that tent the conspiracy which led to the October Revolution was skilfully prepared by two experts according to all the best rules of the conspirator's art.

THE MONTH OF OCTOBER

THE AUTUMN OF 1917 WAS VERY RAINY IN PETROGRAD. A THICK fog hung over the rain-sodden streets. The white nights, in all their fantastic weirdness, had an oppressive effect upon the people, the soldiers, the Government, and the hydra-headed Petrograd Soviet. After Kornilov's insurrection, the city was like a city of the dead; the bourgeoisie, the officials, in fact all the inhabitants, crept into their houses, anxiously locked their doors and pricked up their ears in terror when they heard shots fired from time to time in the streets. Peter's cold, white, gleaming city, built on the bones of peasants, was quivering in death agony.

With the help of the Government troops, the Bolshevik blue-jackets, workers, and soldiers, Kerensky had succeeded in suppressing the insurrection. But the provisional Government had to pay with its life for the help of the Bolshevik soldiers and workers. Kornilov's insurrection saved Bolshevism, and led the mass of the people of Petrograd back to it. Immediately after the suppression of the insurrection, public opinion began to veer. At the elections for the new president of the Petrograd Soviet, the Bolsheviks won by an overwhelming majority, and the Menshevik, Tsereteli, who had hitherto led the Soviet, had to retire. True, he expressed the hope that the Bolshevik majority would last at the most three months, and some of the Social-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks tried to enter into an alliance with the Bolsheviks again, so as to form a sort of coalition Government. But it was patent to all that a yawning abyss had opened in which old Russia was to be swallowed up.

Kornilov's abortive insurrection had inspired the Bolsheviks with new and sinister life, and they now marched firmly forward to power.

The October Insurrection! The fate of Russia was determined during those rainy autumn days and an end put to centuries of conflict waged without ceasing from time immemorial in the steppes, the villages, and towns of the Slav realm, the struggle between the Byzantine-Asiatic State which had built up a brilliant European façade, and widespread anarchy, the unorganized nihilism of a people who were at heart Asiatic and opposed to any form of state. It had been raging for thousands of years. When the first Romanovs ascended the throne, after the anarchy in which the Rurik dynasty had gone down, they were confronted by a vast empire whose inhabitants, half-Tatar and half-Russian, had become wild and uncivilized and entirely ignorant of the meaning of a state even in name. The Romanovs began to build up the State, the land was portioned out, the position of the nobility was fixed and it was educated to its new duties. The Tsar's proconsuls, the Voyevods, lived in their provinces, and set to work to build up afresh the State which had just escaped total ruin. Merchants began to travel the highways, fresh land was placed under cultivation, towns were built, and the Boyars recovered from the horrors of the first Russian Revolution, and the rule of the false Demetrius. But the people scattered over the boundless steppes, in the villages, and along the banks of the great rivers did not wish to build up a State. The spacious Kremlin, with its order-loving officials, the Tsar, and the Crown and Cross all constituted a constraining force to the people of the steppes. And they hated constraint and refused to endure it. Just as the second Romanov was beginning to congratulate himself on the restoration of order, there broke out on the banks of the Volga the famous insurrection led by the Cossack Stenka Razin, whose aim it was to do away with the Tsar, the Boyars, the popes, the nobles, and the merchants, and to

build up a wild Cossack state in which order and constraint would be for ever abolished.

For years he conducted his wild campaign on the banks of the Volga, and across the boundless steppes, which led to Moscow, the city of the Tsar. He destroyed cities, murdered officials, plundered, robbed, and shook the Tsarist Empire to its very foundations. The wild Asiatic hordes were within an ace of doing away with the city of the Tsars for ever! Then with fire and sword, the Russia of the Tsars marched out against the terrible Cossack. And the Russia of the Tsars, Russia *qua* State, conquered. Once more the Boyars, the Voyevods, the nobles, the popes, and the Tsars were able to resume their building up of the State. Then came Peter who made Russia tremble and who erected her European façade. He was cruel, but he subdued the Empire. In the middle of the Red Square of Moscow, the Tsar with his own hand beheaded old Asiatic Russia and annihilated the Strelitz and the Cossacks, who were again trying to enter the lists against the State. The great Tsar stifled nihilistic Russia and for almost a century maintained an aristocratic regime in his country. It was only in the days of the brilliant Catherine that the old menace from the steppes came to life again. On the bank of the river Yaik, beyond the Urals, the Cossack Pugachev headed the bloodiest insurrection that Russia had ever known. He swarmed with his hordes over half Russia, and as had been the case with Razin, his quarrel was with the nobility, the officials, the popes, and every representative of law and order. He fought on the Volga, the Yaik, and the Don, and with him fought the Cossacks, the peasants, and the wild Kirghiz.

“We shall behead every noble in the land,” he declared. “We shall make the true faith prevail, and take over the land for ourselves!” There was not a peasant in Russia who did not agree with him, and the days of Pugachev, the bloody destroyer of the nobility, were the most ghastly old Russia ever experienced. The throne itself tottered, and the Empire of Peter the Great stood

on the edge of the abyss. Catherine dispatched her best generals against Pugachev, but it was only with the greatest difficulty that they succeeded in saving the Empire, wreaking bloody revenge, and annihilating Pugachev. Gloomy, bloodthirsty, Asiatic Russia was once more stunned for about a hundred and fifty years.

But in the autumn of 1917 it arose once more with renewed vigour and the peasants, the soldiers, and the wild hordes from the steppes prepared for a fresh fight. And this time they were no longer confronted by a Tsar. The Tsars, who for centuries had managed to defy the Asiatic hordes with fire and sword, had been overthrown. The Asiatic Russia of the steppes, which from time immemorial had been repressed, was confronted by Kerensky, the intellectual, who hoped to appease the hatred that had been accumulating for centuries by means of reason and intellectual appeals. He failed! And the Russian Empire plunged headlong into the abyss opened by Razin, Pugachev, and the terrible forces of the steppes, which had hitherto been held in check by the Tsars.

In October 1917, it was not a Government, or a form of state, or even a particular *Weltanschauung*, that was overthrown, it was the whole Russian Empire, with its European façade which had been so laboriously built up, stone by stone, on a rugged Asiatic site, not only by its Tsars and its generals but also by its intellectuals, its poets, writers, and scholars. That which was finally and irrevocably overthrown was the intangible quantity which in old Russia was called culture, and in its stead there arose, at least according to the conquered, a cruel Pugachev-like Asiatic world. Hence the apocalyptic, mystic hatred with which the October Revolution filled the whole of bourgeois, intellectual, imperialist, and Europeanized Russia. It was the instinctive hatred which had been handed down from the days of Peter and Razin, the hatred with which the great Tsar had with his own hand beheaded the rebel Strelitz in the Red Square of Moscow.

Today this blood-stained spot in the Red Square is covered by Lenin's mausoleum.

As far as the general public at the time were aware the October Revolution was the work of Lenin, Zinoviev, Kameniev, and Trotsky. Stalin was quite unknown outside his own circle. He was regarded as a bad speaker and a bad writer; he seldom came to the fore, and was held by all to be of much less importance than the men just mentioned. Even as a fighter he did not play a conspicuous part in the October Revolution. It was only in the inner circles of the Party, at the Central Committee, in Lenin's tent, and in the offices of the conspirators that his value and his capacities as a conspirator were appreciated and turned to account. As a matter of fact, from June to October, he was one of those chiefly concerned in making the practical preparations for the October Revolution. At the time of the July insurrection, when many hesitated and were opposed to open conflict, Stalin became a member of the committee which undertook to direct this first outbreak. Even in those days his work lay behind the scenes, and he consistently avoided coming before the public eye. For this the Party had other, better qualified, and more intellectual members—Comrade Trotsky, for instance, who at that time was regarded by all non-Bolsheviks as the real leader of the Party after Lenin.

But whenever a lightning decision, a sudden effort, or a speedy effect was called for, there always loomed out of the background the shadowy outlines of that sombre, pockmarked, Oriental face with its low brow and drooping moustache. Dread of the masses, of the surging, murderous Petrograd mob, in which the soldiers and workers marched side by side with bandits and criminals of both sexes, may have been felt by many a prominent theorist of the Party, but it was unknown to Stalin. And the old conspirator led the July insurrection in which the insurgents numbered half a million, with the same skill with which he conducted a secret meeting of the Communist Party.

Russia's fate was to be decided in the months of September and October. After the two abortive insurrections organized by Kornilov and Lenin respectively, the political situation had

gradually cleared. There were now only two parties, the Government Party, consisting of the bourgeoisie and all the Socialists, supported by the conservative sections of the Army which had remained loyal to the Government, and that of the Bolsheviks, backed by the masses of Petrograd, the garrison, and the blue-jackets of Kronstadt. Between these two parties a conflict was inevitable, for even the Petrograd Soviet, which was originally intended to establish amicable relations between the people and the Government, was being driven more and more to one side by the overwhelming force of the popular rising. The so-called revolutionary parties tried to keep the reins of power in their hands against the popular will in so far as it was openly expressed in Petrograd. But the heart of the populace was seething with that Slav hatred, envy, and lust for vengeance which had been pent up for centuries and was soon to be directed against the revolutionary democracy of the Mensheviks and the Social-Revolutionaries who had become bourgeois, as it were, in a night. The bourgeois parties were openly, if somewhat clumsily, preparing for a last decisive conflict with the Bolsheviks. They resolved to replace the disorganized garrison troops of Petrograd by other regiments, to transfer the seat of Government from the capital which had been Bolshevikized to Moscow which was still loyal, and if the worst came to the worst, to leave the whole of Bolshevikized Petrograd together with the Soviet and the Bolshevik headquarters to fall into the hands of the advancing German army. Arrangements were also made to convene a temporary Parliament to undermine the influence of the Bolsheviks. But the Kerensky Government, composed of a hydra-headed directorate combining democratic, Socialist, and bourgeois elements, had no clear-cut policy or well-thought-out plan of campaign against the Bolsheviks. On the contrary, those at the head of affairs were living from hand to mouth, without any programme, or the means to frame one, and animated only by the hope that Kerensky's speeches would ultimately bring the revolutionary

mob to reason and to a sense of their political responsibilities.

They were dark days for Petrograd. The firing in the streets, unorganized demonstrations, famine, and a paralysing premonition of impending doom defeated all attempts to restore order. The city was convulsed with apprehension. Distressing reports were coming in both from the Front and from the provinces. The peasants were again burning down the houses of the land-owners and seizing the land as they had in 1905, at the Front the soldiers were quite openly fraternizing with the German troops, while the Bolsheviks, in their secret lairs, were preparing their final blow against the Government. The Government knew and saw it all, yet they were powerless! The opportunity which had occurred after the July insurrection, when the Bolsheviks, deprived of their newspapers, their money, and their leaders, might have been dealt a knock-out blow, but had been spared by the democratic Government in order to make a show of democratic virtue, was gone for ever. What would the Government not have given to be able to put the whole of the Central Committee under lock and key now! And yet they temporized and postponed signing the order for the arrest of the Bolsheviks until as a Government they had ceased to exist even in name.

The month of October opened with a spirit of defeatism and indecision, and without any serious attempt being made even to seek for a way out of the difficult situation. It was probably one of the most extraordinary Octobers Russia had ever experienced. From the first the history of the October Revolution and its secret preparation and execution has been so obscured by legend, myth, and fantastic falsehood, that today even the fighters in it and the actual leaders of the revolt find it difficult to separate truth from fiction. Accounts of it run the whole gamut from Right to Left, and it is either extolled to the skies or dragged in the mire. But one and all now regard it as a turning point in the history of Russia. The actual combatants in it, however, were by no means convinced that a new era in the history of

their country had dawned with the capture of the Winter Palace, for they themselves felt sure that they would not be able to remain in power in Petrograd for more than a month or two.

The inhabitants of the capital, accustomed to the daily round of shooting, shouting, and alarms, at first knew nothing about the October revolt. For instance, twenty-four hours after the Government had been overthrown, a magistrate's delegate actually came to Trotsky and asked him whether it was a fact that the Bolsheviks were planning mass demonstrations. Even the press, which for days had been declaring that the Bolshevik rising was imminent, forgot to say anything about it when it was an accomplished fact. The newspapers of October 25th do not even mention the overthrow of the Government. "The newspapers," wrote Trotsky later on, "had been so obsessed by the idea of a rising of armed troops, deeds of plunder, inevitable streams of blood, and revolts of all kinds, and had written so much about it, that they actually failed to notice the Revolution when it really came!"

How then did the October Revolution break out? John Reed, in his well-known book, *Ten Days That Shook the World*, gives a fantastic description of the meeting of the Bolshevik Central Committee on October 10th; of how, just as a resolution to postpone the Revolution was about to be passed, a *deus ex machina*, in the form of a common workman, burst in and shouted excitedly, "You are deciding against the rising. But I tell you it will take place all the same!" Whereupon in terror the Bolsheviks decided in favour of the insurrection!

This fantastic legend is refuted by no less an authority than Stalin himself, who was present at the secret meeting, and subsequently wrote in his pamphlet on the February uprising: "It is hardly necessary to prove that this and similar fairy tales have nothing whatever to do with the truth, and that nothing of the sort happened or could happen at a secret meeting of the Central Committee." It is clear that what most rouses his anger is the assertion that an outsider could have succeeded in finding his

way into the secret meeting of conspirators. It was contrary to the most elementary rules of conspiracy! And Stalin knew what he was talking about.

According to other accounts the October Revolution was engineered by the German General Staff, or organized by certain Englishmen who wished to weaken the Russians, and so on. One popular version had it that the success of October was entirely due to the iron determination of Trotsky who, in the absence of Lenin, directed his hesitating followers and personally led them to victory. This is maintained even to this day by the Trotskyites.

Most of these and similar legends are of course entirely devoid of foundation. But it is contrary to Stalin's principles to be constantly refuting tales emanating from the bourgeois camp. "We may calmly ignore these grotesque rumours," he writes in his pamphlet on Trotsky. "Tales without number are invented by the Opposition and by people who have nothing to do with the Party. And hitherto we have ignored them. We have not paid any attention, for instance, to the misstatements of John Reed and have not troubled to refute them." This indifference to public opinion is characteristic of Stalin. As a matter of fact he cares not a rap for what is said about him, and herein again he differs from Trotsky, who eagerly collects all the comments he can about himself, even the most trifling, and proceeds to refute them in brilliant polemical articles.

What then actually happened?

The leaders of the Bolsheviks gathered together in Zukhanov's rooms on October 10, 1917. There were present, Lenin, Zinoviev, Kameniev, Stalin, Trotsky, Sverdlov, Uritsky, Dzerzhinsky, Kollontai, Bubnov, Lomov, and Sokolnikov. Lenin, who had only just emerged from his hiding-place, was in the Chair. He looked tired and careworn. He knew that the members of the Central Committee were not united, and brought his speech to a close with the following historic resolution: "The Central Committee is of the opinion that the international situation with

which the Russian Revolution has to deal (the mutiny in the German Navy, regarded as portending an international Socialist Revolution in Europe in the near future, the danger of peace between the imperialistic powers for the purpose of stifling the Russian Revolution) and the military situation (the Russian bourgeoisie and Kerensky have undoubtedly resolved to abandon Petrograd to the Germans) and the capture of the majority in the Soviets by the proletarian Party, together with the peasant insurrections and the growing popularity of our own Party (the elections in Moscow), finally the obvious indications that a second Kornilov affair is imminent (the clearing of troops out of Petrograd, the transfer of the Cossacks to the capital, etc.)—all these things together make an armed rising the order of the day. The Central Committee, therefore, takes the view that an armed rising is inevitable and that the need for it has become acute. And it proposes that all party organizations should take steps accordingly and examine and settle all practical problems from this point of view."

The aim of this historic resolution is quite clear. The fear of a renewed rising on the part of the Right, and the fact that the Bolsheviks had had the unexpected good fortune to return to favour with the masses, were to be skilfully exploited. A long debate followed Lenin's speech. Kameniev and Zinoviev were afraid of an armed rising, and regarded it as safer and more profitable for the Party to remain in opposition. But they were opposed by the rest of those present, and as loyal and disciplined Bolsheviks they bowed to the majority who, probably to punish them for their lack of resolution, immediately elected them members of the political Committee which was to handle the political side of the rising, the other members of it being Lenin, Stalin, Trotsky, Sokolnikov, and Bubnov.

Nevertheless Zinoviev and Kameniev would not have been the old exiles they were, if they had agreed immediately and without reserve to the resolution of the majority, and as soon

as the meeting was over they entered upon a factious struggle with the majority as they had been accustomed to do at home, that is to say, in exile. Articles began to appear in the papers, in which they publicly criticized the Party's secret resolution, and it was only a furious letter from Lenin, addressed to the couple from his place of hiding, and in which he called them revolutionary blacklegs, that somewhat subdued their factious spirit of independence. But until the very day the provisional Government was overthrown, they did not cease from secretly agitating against the Party, for in spite of the extraordinary weakness of the Government they had the support of many other Bolsheviks in regarding the issue of the rising as most problematic.

The historic meeting in Zukhanov's room on October 16th was followed by a second secret and prolonged conference of the Party. The Central Committee, together with a few leading Bolsheviks and their adherents, collected in Lesnoya, a small suburb of Petrograd. The discussion dealt with the practical problems connected with the rising. And here again Zinoviev and Kameniev tried to gain supporters for their point of view and addressed a last appeal to those present to postpone the rising.

Stalin then sprang to his feet. Up to that point he had apparently been listening quite dispassionately and had merely nodded dutifully to all Lenin's proposals. But the lack of discipline on the part of the intellectual exiles, who precisely at a moment of such historic importance, for which Stalin had been waiting all his life, were unable to keep their independent views in the background, infuriated the Caucasian who was accustomed to unquestioning obedience. Trembling with excitement, and, as always happened in such circumstances, speaking with a horrible Georgian accent, he began his speech. "The suggestion of Kameniev and Zinoviev," he exclaimed sardonically, "will make smooth the path for the counter-revolution. Are we to wait

until we are attacked? But what if we are never attacked? The rising which we are proposing to organize has indeed practically begun, for the army and the fleet no longer obey Kerensky!"

The resolute tone of the fanatical Georgian produced its effect and Lenin's proposal was carried by a majority of twenty against two, with three abstentions. The resolution which gave the Bolshevik Central Committee a free hand in the practical preparation of the rising ran as follows: "The conference welcomes and wholeheartedly supports the resolution of the Central Committee (of October 10th). It calls upon all the organizations and all workers and soldiers to do everything in their power to prepare for an armed rising in support of the body of leaders elected to this end by the Central Committee, and it expresses its firm conviction that the Central Committee and the Soviet will all in good time seize upon the favourable moment for the rising and the best means of prosecuting it."

At the same time leaders were elected to arrange all practical details. They were five members of the Party, Sverdlov, Stalin, Dzerzhinsky, Bubnov, and Uritsky. Neither Lenin, against whom a warrant for arrest was still out, nor Trotsky, who as President of the Petrograd Soviet was subordinate to the five, was elected to this Committee.

At this early stage in the history of the Soviet the remarkable double system of government which was to be introduced later throughout Russia could already be discerned; and even here, in the preparations for the October Revolution, this peculiar separation between the Government and the ruling Party displayed itself. Legally and officially the rising was the work of the Petrograd Soviet in which, after an acrimonious debate, a corresponding resolution was passed, also on October 16th. The Soviet of Petrograd was a legal organization in which Social-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks sat cheek by jowl with Bolsheviks. Its task was to defend the Revolution against a second Kornilov rising, and the head of the militant revolutionary committee elected for this purpose was Trotsky, who thus ap-

peared to be the real leader of the rising in the eyes of the public and wore the usual laurels. The initiative for the rising also seemed to proceed from Trotsky.

But the fact that as a member of the Communist Party, he merely had to carry out the resolutions passed by the Committee of Five described above, and was subject at all times to disavowal and correction by the Party, was not generally known. Trotsky, who in this affair was really a man of straw for the Party, came to be regarded by the public as the real hero of the October Revolution. This curious duplex system of government, as most people know, prevails in Russia to this day. Every Minister as such is entirely independent in forming his conclusions, but as a member of the Party he is wholly subordinate to the Party's political Committee and cannot call his soul his own. Thus in practice the Committee is far more powerful and more important than any minister. And as was the case in the October rising, one man, but little noticed by the public, was henceforward always present at the most important Party Committees—Stalin.

To be the cynosure of all eyes, to wear the laurels with all their advantages and drawbacks, Stalin left to others. He himself was satisfied with a modest position in the Party which all members out for fame frivolously held in contempt and overlooked, convinced that they were above the Party machinery.

The October Revolution made Trotsky famous. But the fact that behind Trotsky there was a Committee of five men who were of no public interest, remained hidden from all. In October this was the secret of the Party, which had not yet ceased to behave as a body of conspirators. And in fact the whole constitution of present-day Russia is built up on the past of the Party as a body of conspirators. From the beginning it was wedded to the system of distributing duties and powers between the public hero and the secret leader. With his Caucasian career behind him, Stalin, unlike many of his intellectual comrades, preferred the part of secret leader. Apparently he cared not a rap for fame. In any case, it is impossible to deny that from the practical

point of view the October Revolution was carried through by Trotsky; and the Party Committee, whose servant he was, had no occasion to alter any of his plans. Volumes have been written about the part Trotsky played in the October rising, and even Stalin, his arch-enemy, cannot deny that he rendered invaluable service at this period. Indeed, it was precisely his heroic exploits at this juncture that subsequently provided Trotsky with his most powerful weapons in his fight against Stalin. It was obvious that Trotsky, the hero of October, the man to whom the Party owed its victory, could not be a bad Bolshevik, particularly compared with Stalin who had not at the time appeared in the public eye. This is not the place to estimate Trotsky's part in the October rising nor his services to the Party, but it may be interesting to hear Stalin's own account as opposed to Trotsky's.

In his pamphlet *Leninism and Trotskyism*, he writes with some spite and bitterness as follows: "The Trotskyites have spread the rumour that Comrade Trotsky was the only leader of the October rising. Even Comrade Trotsky himself systematically overlooks the Party, the Central Committee of the Party, and the Leningrad Committee of the Party, and does not mention the leading part played by these organizations. By pushing himself forward as the central figure in the October rising, he either intentionally or unintentionally encourages the spread of rumours about the important part played by Comrade Trotsky in the rising. Far be it from me to deny the undoubtedly important part he played. All I wish to point out is that in the October Revolution Comrade Trotsky did not and could not play any individual part for, as President of the Petrograd Soviet, he merely carried out the orders of the established Party authority (i.e. Stalin's) which determined every step Comrade Trotsky took. These are the facts."

These strange sentences, which probably reach the height of partisan spite, illustrate the whole difference between the outlook of Stalin, formed from the angle of the Party machine, and the individualism of Trotsky, and they are amplified a few lines



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LEON TROTSKY

farther down by observations if possible even more bitter. After repeatedly emphasizing the fact that Trotsky was not a member of the Committee which arranged the practical details of the rising, Stalin continues: "The Trotskyites will certainly be astonished to hear this. But there is nothing extraordinary about it, for Comrade Trotsky was a comparatively new member of the Party and could not, of course, play an important role either in the Party or in the October Revolution. He was merely the executor of the will of the Central Committee and its instrument. All those who know the machinery by which the Bolshevik Party is worked will immediately understand that nothing else was possible." These sentences breathing icy contempt and hatred reveal a man who had become a Party automaton unable to endure the glorification of the individual as distinct from the glorification of the Party deity. His argument was that even if Trotsky fought brilliantly in October, what of it? Surely that was his job as a Communist! He himself had performed the most wonderful deeds of robbery and violence in the Caucasus, but he did not boast about them afterwards. And, after all, what was there in fighting bravely? Any Caucasian could do that! The first prerequisite for a Bolshevik was discipline, unquestioning obedience, and subordination to the Party organization, and the ability to persevere in hard times. But instead of that, Trotsky had "merely" fought well and had then had the impudence to despise an old member of the Party like Stalin!

It is impossible for Stalin to believe that but for Trotsky's bravery the October Revolution might never have been carried through. In short, his view is that since the Party organization had determined to seize the reins of power they could not have failed to do so somehow or other. "They tell us," he writes, "that Comrade Trotsky fought well in October. All right! Agreed! Comrade Trotsky certainly did fight well in October. But he was not the only one who did so. The Social-Revolutionaries who at that time supported the Bolsheviks also fought well. What I would maintain is that in the throes of a successful

rising, with the enemy isolated and the revolutionary forces increasing in number, to fight well constitutes no very great feat. At such moments even laggards win the reputation of being heroes. But a true revolutionary is not the man who behaves courageously during a successful rising, but he who, in addition to fighting well in a victorious advance, also knows how to show bravery and to keep a cool head when the Revolution suffers a reverse, when the proletariat is defeated, he who in time of failure knows neither fear, panic nor despair. The Social-Revolutionaries fought very well in October, but everyone knows that these brave fighters were panic-stricken in the days of Brest-Litovsk. It is a sad but undeniable fact that Comrade Trotsky, who fought so well in October, did not display enough courage and energy in the dark days of the Revolution. But the Revolution did not end with the October rising."

In these few sentences the whole of Stalin's fanatical and sombre soul, incapable of all enthusiasm, is laid bare. Fighting spirit, courage, the capacity to hold firm and defend barricades, in fact all the old virtues of the revolutionary, are of secondary consideration in the eyes of this Party automaton, who even when spontaneous outbursts of jubilation occurred remained cool and reserved, immersed in theoretical treatises and the secret work of conspiracy. "Less limelight and publicity and no stage effects" might be his motto, a hateful and incomprehensible one to a man like Trotsky. Secret meetings with a little band of conspirators, in a dirty, smoke-filled room, are much more to Stalin's liking and in his opinion much more in keeping with revolutionary ideals than the most dramatic acts of heroism on the barricades. Fortunately he has no need to display personal prowess in public! His Caucasian past alone provides sufficient proof of it.

But in the days of October, the words quoted above had not yet been written, perhaps not even thought of. Closeted in the Smolny Institute, the members of the Party were waiting to

hear what the Soviet of Petrograd under Trotsky's leadership was doing outside. It was in the streets that history was being written, while in the little rooms of the Central Office, the Party gods, indifferent to world history and interested only to know how their Party was faring, were assembled.

In the streets, in the thick of the fight, on the stage which the whole world was watching with bated breath, was the leader, the hated upstart Trotsky, overshadowing even Lenin who was still in hiding.

In the eyes of the masses, of the whole people, and even of the Communists themselves, Trotsky was the sole hero of October, without whom the Party would never have been victorious. For, after all, he was the head of the Soviet, the leader of the militant revolutionary committee who were the first to defy the Government, and he alone secured the obedience of the soldiers, sailors, and workers who stormed the Winter Palace.

But what was Stalin's part in October? As early as February 1917 he had revealed that side of his political nature which Trotsky dubbed "whimsical," Lenin "capricious," and others "unaccountable." And indeed his behaviour is unaccountable. Almost Menshevik before Lenin's arrival, he afterwards became an ardent Leninist. In the dispute with Kameniev and Zinoviev, he sided with Lenin, though for a few hours he suddenly took it into his head to defend their attitude. The gamut of Communistic variations may be limited, but Stalin has been through them all. Trotsky describes Stalin's behaviour somewhat severely as follows: "Stalin was in a state of extraordinary political uneasiness the whole time," he wrote. "He was up to all kinds of tricks, hardly speaking, and pushing others forward; while he frequently indulged in sallies against Lenin."

Trotsky's description is one-sided and does not tally with the facts. Stalin was not up to tricks nor did he push anyone forward. On the contrary, at critical moments and in dangerous situations he showed a determination and energy which none

can deny.* True, his "caprices" were odd and unexpected, and it is precisely in his unaccountable behaviour that he revealed a certain lack of culture. To this day nobody can tell what Stalin's opinion will be on the morrow. But his caprices, unlike Trotsky's, were never very serious or a menace to the existence of the Party. The role he actually played in October is difficult to define. According to those who knew him at the time, he was relegated to a somewhat insignificant position behind the broad front of his intellectual colleagues, though he performed very important duties inside the Party organization.

As we have said, the Bolshevik leaders spent the fateful days of October in the Smolny Institute, which had become their place of residence. Its maze of gloomy passages and corridors was guarded by soldiers, workers, and Bolsheviks; and the last of the Mensheviks who had timidly dared to make their presence felt had been ejected. The endless passages and corridors were badly lighted in those days, and the large uncomfortable class-rooms were cold and dirty. The Smolny Institute, a magnificent building erected by Rastelli, had once been the most aristocratic girls' school of Russia. Only the daughters of the noblest families in the Tsar's Empire were allowed to be educated there; the Tsarina's ladies-in-waiting, the most beautiful women in Russia, were recruited from its ranks. The Revolution had driven out the fair inmates of the institution, and now Stalin, Kameniev, and Trotsky sat in the deserted rooms. It was from Smolny that Trotsky directed the rising, and in Smolny that he received the telephone message informing him of the fall of the Government. After the strain he had undergone for some days past he fainted away. When he recovered he drove to the Soviet and proclaimed the historic news: "In the name of the revolutionary War-Committee I declare that the Provisional Government has ceased to exist."

* During the fighting for the Winter Palace, for instance, he went out among the troops that had remained loyal to the Government, and, paying no heed to the conflict in the streets, tried to win them over to the side of the proletariat.

Stalin did not faint away, nor did he make proclamations. All he did was to sit in the Smolny Institute and freeze. But when the news of the fall of the Winter Palace arrived, he sat down and wrote the most emotional lines he has ever written in his life. They were printed in the *Pravda* of October 28th. "It has come to pass! The power is in the hands of the workers, the soldiers, and the peasants! At one blow from the heroic advance guard of Petrograd workers and soldiers, the sham anti-popular Government has been overthrown, and the red flag of revolution now flies over the semi-monarchical Winter Palace!"

On that same day, October 28th, in accordance with a resolution passed by the Council of Workers and Soldiers, the first Soviet Government of Russia was formed. In the Party papers the members of the Government were given in the following order: Chairman, Lenin; Commissar for Home Affairs, Rykov; Agriculture, Miliutin; Labour, Shlyapnikov; Trade and Industry, Pogia; Education, Lunacharsky; Finance, Skvortsov; Foreign Affairs, D. Bronstein (Trotsky); Justice, Opakov; Post Office, Avilov; National Minorities, J. V. Djugashvili (Stalin).

In this list of Ministers, Stalin comes last, and apparently the post was created purely out of courtesy to him, as an expert on the question of nationalities. But at that time, and for a long while to come, the area represented by Soviet Russia had no national minorities to show. For in Petrograd and Moscow, the national minorities, that is to say the Tatar rag-and-bone men and the Finnish cab-drivers, scarcely stood in need of a special ministry! And for the time being the Soviet Government had no power over other territories. But apparently Stalin was satisfied with his bogus post, though he kept it only for a few months. At least, it gave him a seat on the supreme Bolshevik Olympus. In the general scramble for office which began among the members of the Party after the *coup d'état*, he took no part. To him Government appointments appeared immaterial, but he clung all the more tenaciously to posts within the Party, though his

prominent colleagues had ceased to take any interest in them.

Since then thirteen long years have passed, and out of the lengthy list of People's Commissars, it is today impossible to point to one who still plays a notable part in politics. Lenin is dead. Trotsky has been banished. And the rest are entirely forgotten and unknown. As Trotsky says: "They dropped into the wastepaper basket of history."

Stalin alone, the last and most retiring of them all, has survived! He has risen to the heights, growing ever more and more powerful, until at last his dark shadow is cast over the whole of the Tsar's Empire. Stalin, who never strove after position or fame, whom no one knew, and for whom second- and third-rate posts were regarded as good enough, alone survived and overcame all his political enemies, all those who on that dull and cloudy day gathered in the marble hall of the Smolny Institute to form the first Communist Government in the world. They have one and all been swept away by the storms of history. The only one who remains is Koba, who looks so modest and insignificant behind his colleagues in the picture of the first Soviet.

How did precisely Stalin, who made so little stir, who was neither a gifted writer nor an orator, who, to judge from the accounts of all who knew him, was unschooled in doctrine, and for whom an absurd post, which he held only for a few months, was created merely for the sake of appearance—how did he come to wield the stupendous power he has kept for the last six years? How is it that he has become a more important figure than Lenin, and is now stamping the imprint of his undoubtedly Asiatic mind and his sullen personality on the whole of Russia, the whole of Bolshevism, the Revolution, and almost the whole world?

In order to answer this question we must trace the course of the Revolution and consider the peculiar qualities of Stalin, his activities, and his manner of life in so far as they found their expression in the Revolution. For the road he trod hand in hand with the Revolution is his road to power.

THE NEW MASTERS

IF DURING THE FIRST DAYS OF THE REVOLUTION PETROGRAD AND the whole of Russia was a madhouse, after the October Revolution the city itself, as far as the middle classes and the majority of the workers were concerned, became like a huge padded cell full of dangerous lunatics. This was a fact recognized by all, by the Press, by the late Government, by the German generals, and even by the Communists themselves. In the tense excitement of the first days of the Revolution, and during the preparations for the rising, nobody had considered what the consequences of overthrowing the Government would be. And it was only after they had picked up the reins of power overnight, as it were, that the Communists were struck with the appalling nature of their undertaking and grew frightened. With such vast historic responsibilities it seemed impossible to carry on any longer with facile slogans.

Many of the leaders were obviously anxious to withdraw from the Party, the majority of them being convinced that Bolshevism would be overthrown in a few weeks and that they would have to take refuge abroad again as they had done in 1905. "Do you know what this means?" said no less a personage than Krassin a few weeks after the October *coup d'état* to his friend Solomon, an old Bolshevik who had just arrived in Petrograd. "It is Socialism, pure and immediate, carried to the farthest lengths of stupidity. Lenin and everybody have all gone mad. Everything the Social-Democrats preached has been forgotten. It is utter lunacy! And as for Lenin—you'll see! There's

no making him out. The whole thing is a nightmare." This opinion was shared by the well-known Soviet diplomat Vorovsky. "How can Lenin, who is a hopeless visionary, create anything?" he exclaimed. "It is enough to upset the devil himself, my dear friend," declared Elizarov, Lenin's brother-in-law and most intimate friend, to Solomon. "I am Minister of Transport here, that is to say, Transport Commissar. But our whole Cabinet has gone mad on World Revolution, damn it all! 'Pon my soul, they are all crazy, Volodya (Lenin) included. It is useless to argue with him. Between ourselves—and I'm not joking—I often think he is not quite normal. In fact we are all watching a piece of one hundred per cent stupidity. A blind horse could see that we are on the verge of a fiasco. I expect the catastrophe any day!" And Krassin, who had already filled various Bolshevik ministerial posts, passed the final verdict on Bolshevism. "This nonsense cannot last long," he declared. "A few more stupidities and blackguardly tricks, and they'll be off abroad again saying they hadn't thought it out yet or read it up. And then they will get out old Marx again and look for fresh arguments."

It was only fear of Lenin and the conviction that without him everything would collapse more rapidly, and the hope that perhaps after all he would be able to give a logical explanation of everything, that preserved some semblance of discipline in the Party. But for the moment it was impossible to reason with Lenin. If, for instance, it was pointed out to him that Russia would perish through his experiment, he would reply: "It is not Russia that is important. I don't care a rap for Russia! Russia is only a stepping-stone to World Revolution." Observations of this kind must have struck even professed revolutionaries, who were not yet entirely hypnotized by their new roles, as sheer madness. There were only one or two who did not worry their heads about what was happening, either because they agreed with Lenin, or because they were not concerned with thinking at all. Among these few were Trotsky and Stalin, the former because he was at last playing a part on a stage on which the eyes

of the whole world were fixed, and on which he could let himself go as he liked, and the latter because in circumstances which were novel to the rest he felt in his element. The sinister cloud that hung over Russia was as familiar to him, if he were conscious of it at all, as the atmosphere to which he had long been accustomed in his Communist retreats; and the beginnings of Bolshevism, which Russia regarded as the most fantastic absurdity, constituted for Stalin the one hour for which he had been waiting all his life. The Communist fraternity, whose chief concern hitherto had been with such momentous questions as the best way of distributing forbidden literature, were now claiming the right to change the whole face of the globe. To Stalin this did not seem anything extraordinary. Just as Jenghiz-Khan had thought fit to apply the laws and customs of a little body of Mongolian nomads to the whole world, so did Stalin regard his small world of obscure conspirators as the acme of human achievement in politics, intellect, and culture. He had never felt any theoretical doubts, and he did not do so now, and was unaccountable and self-willed only in the practical conclusions he drew from his theoretical beliefs. But for the time being theory played but little part in this government of workers and peasants. The Party of sedition in Russia, which the overthrow of the Government had placed at the head of affairs in the new State, began slowly and uncertainly at first to grope its way to clarity in the gloomy passages and class-rooms of the Smolny Institute.

Day after day Stalin went complacently to his Ministry or to attend a Cabinet meeting in one of the neglected and deserted class-rooms of the Institute. The room allotted to the Ministry for National Minorities was quite empty. No business was done there and it was entirely innocent of pens, paper, official forms, or clerks. All it contained was a comfortable leather armchair which had once belonged to a former venerable lady teacher, in which the new Bolshevik Minister smoked his morning pipe as he pondered over the problem of protect-

ing national minorities. Now and again a neighbour, one of the newly hatched ministers, would, in response to repeated applications, lend him a rusty old pen and a scrap of paper, on which he would write down the result of his cogitations in the form of orders to the oppressed minorities. The fact that these orders were never executed and perhaps not even read, did not trouble him in the least. Even Lenin, in the early days of his power, did not much care whether his orders were carried out or not. He was content to see them published in the press and create consternation throughout Russia.

The Council of People's Commissars met daily under the presidency of Lenin, and Stalin attended these meetings as regularly as he did his own Ministry. These gatherings at which the old exiles, theorists, conspirators, and local leaders could give full vent to their passions, were as strange as they proved historic. Resolutions were passed one after the other, each one more unexpected than the last. Questions were solemnly discussed, the mere mention of which would have stupefied the most insignificant official in the most insignificant department of the pre-revolutionary Government. On the other hand, subjects were placed on the Cabinet agenda for the day which would formerly have been settled at the police station. The question whether Comrade Solomon had been right to box Comrade Uritsky on the ears was regarded as just as much within the Cabinet's jurisdiction as to decide whether the new State should maintain the old octrois and frontier guards, or whether as vestiges of Tsarism they should be abolished together with the currency, marriage, and the merchants. Most of the People's Commissars were as yet hardly aware that they were rulers, and they took ridiculous Party questions, old Party gossip, and Party quarrels as seriously as the conclusion of peace with Germany, for instance. Oddly enough the confused mass of senseless and unpractical orders and laws that resulted from the meetings of the People's Commissars, were seen in their true light by Lenin himself. If his attention was called to the absurdity or impracti-

cability of any order, such as the one relating to the nationalization of smuggling, for instance, he made no attempt to demonstrate either its importance or its necessity but admitted its futility, while at the same time he insisted on its immediate promulgation. It was only subsequently that his reasons for this inflation of orders and enactments became clear. In his heart of hearts, even Lenin was firmly convinced that both he and the Bolsheviks would be done for in a few months, and thus it was more or less a matter of indifference to him whether for the moment the decrees of his provisional Government were treated seriously or as a joke. All that mattered was that the legislation passed by the Communists should act as a guidance to future generations when they came to inaugurate their glorious reforms.

It is in this light, too, that we should regard the few orders issued by Stalin, which, as the hundred and one tribes in Russia all wanted self-determination, were universally treated with derision at the time. The decrees culminated with the famous slogan, "The right of self-determination to the point of state-dissolution!"

In the early days Stalin could not indulge his predilection in favour of centralization, but even during that period of general hysteria he kept a clear head and sober judgment. At the meetings of the People's Commissars he even dared to cross swords with Lenin on matters of vital concern, and with his rough ideas of a rationality based on the principles of sedition, he tried to adapt problems of state to the mind of the average Communist.

Inside the Smolny Institute, at the Party committees and meetings, an extraordinary state of affairs prevailed. Numerically the Party was still surprisingly small, and within the group the traditions and exorbitant notions of the old days of exile and conspiracy were matters of far deeper concern than the great tasks which now daily confronted it. The tense excitement of October was over, and all the hatred, envy, and malice, in fact

all the evils of the old days of exile, once more came to life among the new masters of the State, who lived shut up together in the Smolny Institute with their wives and children. This state of affairs tended to favour the further development of the émigré spirit, and the creation of an atmosphere peculiar to the small exclusive cliques. Gradually the first alarm following upon victory abated, and the lack of culture of most of the Bolsheviks sometimes led to extraordinary scenes. At times, in the anteroom to the Council Chamber, when the People's Commissars met, old Bolsheviks could be seen not only hurling insults at each other but actually engaging in hand-to-hand fights. Whereupon Lenin, at last disturbed by the appalling uproar, would come out of the adjoining room, draw up a report of what had happened, and immediately convene the Council of the People's Commissars.

The reason why the various Comrades, Lenin included, hated, despised, and slandered one another was always the same. Comrade X had been an Otsovist, an Ultimatist in 1909, and Comrade Y had expressed bigoted views on some question or other at the Stockholm Congress. Their opponents of 1909 had never forgotten these facts, and utterly without evidence and authority, hinted that a man who in 1909 had been an Ultimatist might quite well be a German spy today. The spirit of these small party cliques, in which every member out of sheer boredom was at loggerheads with every other member, now became the official spirit of the Russian Government. And the presence of the wives lent an additional piquancy to the situation. Thus the Party Court often had to settle private suits, arising, for instance, out of the charge made by one Minister's wife that another Minister's wife had taken a saucepan of milk from her in the common kitchen when she had no business to do so. This would of course lead to a long philosophical discussion as to whether theft were or were not still a punishable offence; the Ministers involved would make endless speeches full of quotations from the Party gods both high and low, and to the

confusion of all present and with a total disregard for the nerves of their colleagues and the time at their disposal, would fight and roar like Berserks in defence of their domestic honour. The chatter of women and children, yells, scandal-mongering, ancient Party feuds, murderous hatred, women's quarrels, family scandals, wild reproaches, suspicions, and mad fighting filled the building under the roof of which the men belonging to these families debated and passed resolutions upon questions of historic importance, on which the lives and fates of millions of people depended. With this rough sketch, nobody with the smallest claims to possessing imagination can fail to perceive that the first period of Soviet rule was one of complete chaos, unprecedented confusion, and sinister madness.

Instead of sending diplomatic notes, the Foreign Office used to broadcast into the ether hysterical telegrams addressed to "the whole world." The Finance Ministry closed the banks and discussed the abolition of money. The Ministry of Justice appointed sailors as judges, and the Council of War made a certain Lieutenant Krylenko Commander-in-Chief of the Army of eleven million men. And over this chaos of orders, appointments, and family tittle-tattle, over the half-mad Smolny Institute, hung the storm cloud of an imminent catastrophe which was expected at any moment. Every day the German army was advancing farther and farther into Russia, and peace, which had hitherto been a demagogic demand, was now forced upon the new rulers and was to constitute their first great Government measure. For Russia had no Government except the one represented by the inmates of the Smolny Institute. In the country districts, and throughout the Tsar's Empire, the Soviets were raging and bands of soldiers and workmen and enterprising young people of every category, who imagined that their time had come, formed republican and revolutionary committees. Every district, nearly every town, was separated from the rest by a wall of insurgents, while bodies of determined and resolute soldiers returning from the Front were pouring

over Russia. All transport was paralysed. The rulers of the Smolny Institute were the only people who had even the remotest claim to be regarded as the legitimate heirs of the Kerensky Government, that is to say if anything in those days could be called legitimate.

The various stages of the peace negotiations between the Bolsheviks and the Germans are matters of common knowledge. Trotsky, the histrionic genius of Bolshevism, harangued the German generals, inciting them to revolution, and when driven into a corner discovered a way out unique in the annals of history by proclaiming: "We do not conclude peace. But the war will not be continued!"

This absurd gesture was surpassed only by the telegram of the second delegation which concluded peace. As is well known this telegram, which was addressed to Lenin, read: "Signed without reading."

The peace negotiations led to violent disputes among the inmates of the Smolny Institute. The Commissars, in so far as they were politically important, were divided into two main camps—those under Lenin's leadership, who wanted an immediate peace and were ready to accept any conditions, on the supposition that even the worst terms would ultimately be mitigated owing to the agitation the negotiations would produce in the ranks of German Labour; and those under Trotsky, who refused to accept the peace treaty and wished before the eyes of the whole world solemnly to capitulate merely to the threat of German bayonets, that is to say, in the face of obvious compulsion on the part of the Germans, thus signing the treaty without reading it. A third and smaller group, on the other hand, demanded the continuation of the war, which henceforward was to be called the "revolutionary war." It was resolved to consult the local Soviets. Of the thousands of answers that poured into the Smolny Institute, only two were in favour of an immediate conclusion of peace. And as all the world knows, it was Trotsky's point of view that prevailed.

The People's Commissars were now sitting almost uninterrupted, and the question of peace or war was eagerly debated with the usual exaggerated garrulity. Stalin regularly attended these meetings, and with his head bowed and his hands behind his back, he would saunter indolently through the Council Chamber, trying to introduce a little clarity into the question. The efforts of Lenin and Trotsky to rouse the working classes of Europe by virtue of the fact that they were sitting at the same conference table with German generals were incomprehensible to his simple understanding. He would walk over to the window, press his brow against the pane, and become lost in silent thought. Somewhere far away in the distance the proletariat of the world as an abstract world power sat enthroned. Stalin was a convinced believer in World Revolution, and yet all about him, within the walls of the Smolny Institute, in Petrograd, and in the villages and towns throughout the country, Russia was clamouring loudly and unmistakably for peace. Stalin did not believe in a peace concluded with German generals. He knew very little more about Germany than Kamo, who had so long been an inmate of German lunatic asylums, had told him. But that was enough for him!

He gazed compassionately at Lenin. How could he possibly address working people over the heads of generals? Stalin could not understand it. "The Germans will never conclude peace with us," he growled to himself, and went over to the conference table. In front of him, with his long slender fingers buried in his hair, sat Trotsky, the hero of the day. Stalin bent over him, and glancing at Lenin out of the corner of his eye, whispered: "The old man is still hoping for peace. He won't get it!" Trotsky looked up, and gazing dreamily at the ugly Georgian, turned his back on him.

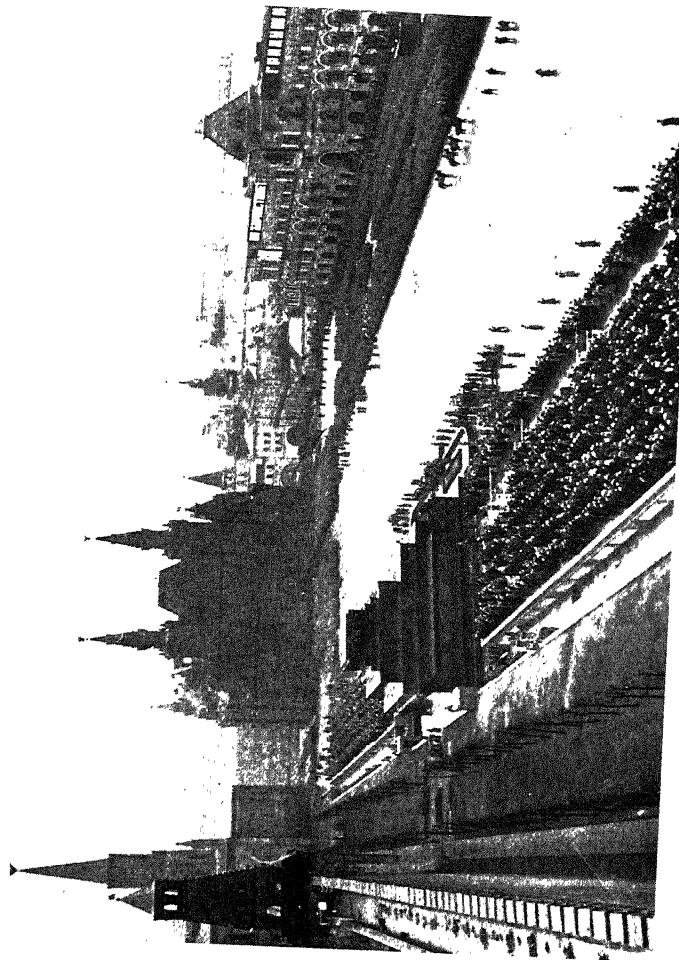
What did the opinion of a Stalin matter? It was surprising that such people should be allowed to have any opinion at all! But Stalin took no notice of Trotsky's rebuff. He sauntered back through the room, stopped in front of Lenin, filled his pipe,

and at last observed dourly: "We cannot accept the terms of the German imperialists, nor can we carry on the war. Hadn't we better break off the negotiations, Comrade Lenin, and reopen them later on?"

This was perhaps the only sensible suggestion made during this mad period. Lenin listened attentively, and was silent for a while. Unlike Trotsky, he knew that Stalin's Oriental cunning was not always to be despised. At last he shook his head energetically. "If we do not sign the treaty they will in three weeks endorse the death sentence of the Soviet power."

Truth to tell, Stalin was not thinking about the death of the Soviet. This was not what they had only just come into power for. As a man of the people, he felt the mood of the masses better than many of the others. Above all, he felt that the peasants must be withdrawn from the Front, and the rest would then follow as the night the day. As usual on this occasion he again, as it were by instinct, found the obvious and rational solution, which was beyond the range of the visionaries and was calmly reposing in the realm of facts. When he first heard Trotsky's ridiculous formula, "The war will stop, the peace will not be signed, the army will be demobilized," he was jubilant. As the army was pouring back from the Front in any case, it seemed to him advisable to support this mass movement by means of some enactment and thus perhaps secure fresh adherents.

"The way out of the difficult situation," he declared at a meeting of the Commissars, "is to be found in Trotsky's compromise." But when the meeting broke up long after midnight and he retired to his squalid bedroom he smiled a smile of malicious superiority. As an active veteran he calmly reviewed the circumstances. He had known Comrade Trotsky well only for a few months, but he was already aware of the fact that this much belauded hero, whose proposals he had just supported, was spending his days and nights in agonies of the wildest terror. Trotsky, who had stepped so enthusiastically into the limelight



THE RED SQUARE, MOSCOW

TROOPS DRAWN UP OPPOSITE LENIN'S MAUSOLEUM

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in connexion with the peace negotiations was afraid of the generals, he was afraid of peace, of responsibility, and above all of the gallows with which every Bolshevik was menaced. Stalin could read his hysterical terror in every gesture and every word. He looked on, shook his head, and was silent. Only old Bolsheviks like himself, bombthrowers and terrorists, could infallibly distinguish between courage and cowardice in men. "Comrade Trotsky," he wrote many years later, "who fought so well when everybody was enthusiastic, was terror-stricken at the time of the Brest-Litovsk negotiations." But Stalin knew no fear. Just before the conclusion of peace, when the German army was advancing on Petrograd, and all the pillars of the Party, Kuybyshev, Bubnov, Dzershinsky, and others were making more or less hysterical speeches and were obviously anxious to shift the responsibility for the shameful peace on to somebody else's shoulders, Stalin never opened his mouth and took no share in the discussions, but behaved as though the matter had nothing whatever to do with him. Most of the time he sat by himself in his one-roomed Ministry, waiting and planning, which drew from Trotsky the scornful remark that Stalin had no point of view at all.

In reality, Stalin wished to avoid having anything to do with his comrades' puerile and hysterical outbursts of fear. Besides, at bottom, the agitation round the conference table in Brest-Litovsk interested him very little. No matter how vital his European comrades might regard it to proclaim to the proletariat of the world the why and wherefore of the shameful peace which the first Socialist Republic in the world was being forced to conclude with the German imperialists, he could not work up any enthusiasm on the subject, particularly as the surrender of Estonia and Latvia was the price the Soviet Government was paying for it.

Trotsky was perfectly right when with considerable malice he wrote some years later that Stalin was interested only in "Peace in *one* country," just as subsequently he was interested

only in "Socialism in *one* country." Stalin was much too much of a sober and practical politician, or at any rate a man possessed by one fundamental idea to the exclusion of all others, to be able to take any deep interest in the theoretical foundations of the peace. Peace was brutally forced upon them; they must therefore prolong the negotiations as long as possible and sign at the very last moment. But above all, they must concern themselves about peace in their own country, a requirement which the German generals strangely enough granted the Bolsheviks. For Stalin the problem was fairly simple and he was not accustomed to waste words over simple problems. During the Brest-Litovsk days he did not once appear before the public eye.

The Party as a whole thought differently. To them the peace seemed undignified and dangerous, and the meetings of the various groups were held in an atmosphere laden with despair, hatred, and fear. There were even moments when the majority of the Party, including Trotsky, despite the demobilized Russian Front, passionately advocated the prolongation of the revolutionary war against the German imperialists. For a while, as everyone knows, Trotsky actually thought of soliciting English and French help to this end.

Shortly before March 3rd, the day when peace was to be concluded, Lenin summoned the Commissars to a last decisive meeting. He delivered a short speech in which he defended his own contention that immediate peace was imperative. Stalin hardly listened. He sat uncomfortably squeezed in between two comrades, and gazed listlessly at his dirty fingernails. At the end, true to his notions of Party discipline, he voted as usual for Lenin. Even at this moment of grave crisis, his Caucasian traditions made him fall in with the attitude of his senior in rank.

The Peace of Brest-Litovsk was signed on March 3, 1918. The danger of a German invasion was over. And as usual after such an event the Party and the whole of Russia raised a wild despairing outcry against the criminals of Brest-Litovsk.

This happened when the Soviet Government had been in existence for five months, and irresponsible optimists had estimated that their rule would last only a few weeks! Gradually the new rulers began to settle down to their duties. Petrograd, Moscow, and most of the country were already Bolshevik. Soon the first lorries full of pale and terrified citizens, torn from their beds, were to be seen driving through the streets, and the cellars of the Smolny Institute, the Cheka's first dungeons, began to be filled with enemies of the new regime, who were doomed to death.

The era of Red Terror, the era of militant Communism had dawned!

The Government moved to Moscow, and began to set to work to enforce the laws and regulations which had at first been promulgated only for purposes of agitation and as a legacy from their successors. But General Kornilov was collecting his troops in the South on the Don, and constituted a serious menace.

THE CIVIL WAR

A SWARM OF TEN MILLION ARMED MEN POURED OVER RUSSIA after the conclusion of peace. Hordes of soldiers returning home pushed their way into the overcrowded trains. They were starving and took whatever they could find to eat. They plundered right and left, searching chiefly for alcohol which they drank whenever they could lay hands on it. Then when they were drunk they would reel on farther, clear themselves a place in a train, and, singing crapulously to themselves, continue their journey through the country with a good deal to say, though but little in favour of the Soviet.

In the country districts these hordes, thinking that they themselves were the last representatives of State authority, collected into regular armies who fought the Soviets.

At the same time, in the south, in the land of the Cossacks who were loyal to the Tsar, the remains of the Russian army, who recognized neither the Soviets nor the Peace of Brest-Litovsk, collected round Kornilov, Kalidin, and Denikin. On the confines of Russia, in the Ukraine, in the Caucasus, and in Turkestan a spirit of separatism came into being, while in the east, in the snow-covered wastes of Siberia, Admiral Kolchak was forming his White Army out of prisoners of war and old officers. Close to Petrograd was General Yudenich with his troops. In short, the Soviet Government was surrounded by a solid ring of enemies.

To confront them there was only a group of leaders most of whom disagreed with one another, a body of unreliable armed

sailors and workers, and the cellars of the Cheka which were constantly filling and emptying. In the Soviet the old phrase was again heard, "Citizens, it is time we parted. The hour for murder has struck!"

"We shall march through Russia with fire and sword," said Lenin at the time, and Trotsky reminded the citizens of the machine that separated the head from the body. The technique of terror was quickly mastered by the new Government and with surprising thoroughness. Members of the bourgeoisie, Menshevik workers, officers, nobles, and officials were executed by the thousand, and in this manner the danger undoubtedly presented by the enemy at home was removed once and for all with primitive brutality. There remained the external enemies, the White troops which had gathered about the old generals. They and their leaders were beyond the reach of the Cheka. Against these foes, who although they did not always belong to the Right, were nevertheless the incarnation of the pre-Bolshevik Russia of the Tsar or of Kerensky, the Soviets waged their famous civil war which lasted for years and was fought in southern Russia, on the Volga, in the Ukraine, among the Cossacks, and finally in almost every province in the empire. And the smallest corner in the country produced a hero and a martyr for both sides.

Almost over-night, so to speak, the Soviets raised a ragged, hungry, and badly organized Red Army which was opposed on all fronts by an enemy no less hungry and ragged. And the fight was a fight to the death. The opponents who could hardly be distinguished from each other in appearance fought heroically. The war was waged in mud and filth, along endless highways, in wastes of snow and sandy deserts, in primitive trenches, and it was characterized by the most terrible brutality and unbounded hate! On both sides bands of fighters were led by veterans in the art of war, such men, for instance, as the Ataman Makhno. Everywhere confusion and chaos reigned. Peasants became savages and joined in the fight, behaving like Caucasian

clans suddenly streaming down from their mountains. This fight in which every man's hand was against his neighbour, grew to colossal proportions, and in those gloomy and terrible years the most ghastly bestiality, mediæval horror, bloodthirstiness, and rapine ran riot throughout Russia.

The Red Army and the history of its triumphs and defeats is most closely connected in the eyes of the world with the name of the Red Field Marshal who organized and led it—Trotsky. As Minister of War and Commander-in-Chief of the Red forces, Trotsky, the journalist, organized the defensive forces of the Union, literally created regiments out of nothing and proceeded to drive them forward into battle by placing rows of machine guns in their rear. He worked out strategic plans, imposed a relentless discipline on his troops, and thus created an army capable, up to a point, of doing battle.

In his luxurious train made up of the Tsar's private suite of carriages, he tore from one end of Russia to the other, delivered brilliant speeches, issued brutal orders, appointed and banished generals, had anybody who showed signs of insubordination shot and, according to all accounts, even risked his person for a few minutes by entering a zone within range of enemy fire. The Revolution had reserved two striking parts for Trotsky, at Brest and in the civil war, and no one knew better how to make the most of them. Every word he uttered was a potential slice from history, every one of his gestures an event of world-wide importance. As a revolutionary leader, he was a brilliant figure. For him the whole planet was and still is merely a pedestal for his monument and the history of the world a footnote to his biography. The idea of Trotsky as the supreme warrior is deeply embedded in the minds of his contemporaries, and his name has only to be mentioned in order immediately to conjure up the vision of a great journalist who became as it were over-night the Carnot of the Soviet power. And nothing can obliterate this image.

In this connexion it is interesting to call to mind what that

old conspirator and sceptic, Krassin, said about Trotsky. "The man who is trembling most," he declared in the middle of the civil war, "is Field Marshal Trotsky. If Stalin, who though perhaps not so clever is undoubtedly a much braver, calmer and, in addition more honest man, were not at his side, he would have run away long ago. But Stalin has laid fast hold of him, and as a matter of fact is conducting the whole of the defensive operations of Soviet Russia without showing his face, leaving to Trotsky the external accessories of power and the title of Commander-in-Chief. Trotsky delivers fiery speeches and issues orders dictated by Stalin. He also has people shot and imagines that he is Napoleon in person." *

These astounding words were confirmed by the old Bolshevik, Solomon, who has little reason to praise Stalin. "Stalin," writes Solomon in his well-known book, *Under the Power of the Reds*, "devoted himself heart and soul to the Communist war. As a political Commissar, he was constantly at the side of Trotsky—God alone knew how brave the Field Marshal was!—and Stalin who was brave and did not know what fear was really did all his work and left him the laurels of Commander-in-Chief. He forced Trotsky to be brave!"

This amazing statement, which might be amplified by many similar ones, sheds an entirely new light on Trotsky's part in the civil war. No less a personage than Voroshilov, afterwards Minister of War, has devoted a whole book to the part Stalin played in the civil war. Trotsky, who generally contradicts books of this kind in great detail, contented himself with regard to this one with the characteristic laconic remark, "The whole thing from beginning to end is a base lie!"

During the civil war Stalin's official position was President of the Workmen's and Peasants' Inspection Office, which at that time was the highest supervisory position in the Party, but an unpretentious post in the Government which nobody wanted.

* The words and those that follow were uttered long before Lenin's death, long before Stalin seized the reins of power.

It was given to him a few months after the *coup d'état*, when he had resigned his dignified position as Minister for National Minorities. The duties of his new office consisted in discovering and combating all cases of corruption, disobedience, and misdemeanours of every kind within the Party. This important duty formed no essential part of the functions of Government in the first years of the Revolution, for in the early days the Party had too much to do to hound down crime within its own ranks. And for the time being, as Lenin himself observed, even the criminal elements could readily be turned to account. It was only some years later that in Stalin's hands the Inspection Office became a formidable weapon in the fight against political opponents within the Party. But in the years of militant Communism, Stalin cared not a rap for his office. Months would often go by without his showing his face inside the building, and it was only when an exceptionally notorious scandal occurred that Stalin would suddenly burst furiously into Lenin's presence and by virtue of his office demand and obtain the recall of some Comrade or other.

But incidentally, so to speak, Stalin, like a number of other Bolshevik leaders, was a member of the supreme War Council, which gave him an opportunity of devoting himself entirely to military duties. Only very few old Communists proved themselves good soldiers in the course of the civil war; most of them lacked all sense of military discipline and subordination. As soldiers and officers in the Red Army, they behaved as though they were at a crowded political meeting. They delivered long speeches, criticized all their superiors' orders, carried on arguments on matters of principle at the most unsuitable moments, and consistently kept out of the enemy's way. It was obviously impossible to achieve anything from the military point of view with such material. Trotsky, therefore, decided to create a regular Government army under the leadership of Tsarist officers.

In the creation of this Red Army Stalin, as member of the

War Council, played his part. With his help and under the leadership of Budionny, the Tsarist sergeant-major, and his old friend Voroshilov, the legendary first mounted army, known as Budionny's Mounted Army, came into being and developed into one of the ornaments of the Soviet power.

It was during the bloody days of the civil war that the hostility between Stalin and Trotsky began, a hostility which lasted throughout the history of the Soviet power and only ended ten years later with Trotsky's expulsion from Russia. Everything about Trotsky was inevitably unsympathetic to Stalin—his long years of exile, his love of rhetorical phrases, his good education, and last but not least his rapid rise in the Party, for he had been a Menshevik, and became a Communist only in 1917. Stalin and Trotsky represented the two extremes of the Communist Party. As men, as politicians, as Communists, they hailed from two entirely different spheres. Trotsky, the brilliant European, the trained egotistic author, and Stalin, the typical Asiatic, a man devoid of vanity and exacting needs, with the sober sinister mind of an Oriental conspirator—these two men were bound to hate each other and oppose each other to the death. From the physical point of view alone Stalin could not endure a man like Trotsky, just as the mere sight of Stalin's pockmarked face must always have made Trotsky feel wretched.

The hostility between the two, which was rooted in human rather than in political differences, dates from the time of the civil war and the period occupied in the creation of the Red Army, when Stalin's profoundly Oriental militarism and his Asiatic ideas on strategy and tactics clashed with Trotsky's European notions of centralized organization. On questions of Bolshevik tactics, the Field Marshal would not listen to his adviser. He regarded the civil war as a fight which should be strictly organized and centralized according to the good old rules of the art of war. But Stalin would not hear of military rules of war or of any strict organization. To his mind the civil war was above all a guerrilla war waged by peasants who had become

savages and with ruthless cruelty fell upon their enemies in small bands and annihilated them. But this was guerrilla warfare as carried on by the Caucasian tribes and was something that Stalin knew and understood, and he regarded it as the best method for fighting the White Guards. Furthermore he quite rightly assumed that a centralized military organization such as Trotsky wished to establish was impossible in the days of the civil war. Popular guerrilla warfare cannot be organized but must spread spontaneously with elemental fury. From the military point of view Stalin was Trotsky's subordinate during the course of the civil war, and this proved the latter's undoing.

Stalin's headquarters were at Tsaritsyn, an important centre on the Volga, where he was in command of the Tenth Army, surrounded by men like Voroshilov and Budionny who sympathized with his views and carried on his guerrilla warfare. All round him the White generals were advancing menacingly on Tsaritsyn. Stalin calmly dictated his orders. With the trained eye of a Caucasian, requiring no actual experience of war, he grasped the situation in a flash. Voroshilov's Mounted Army was fighting along the extended serrated front near Tsaritsyn. The official Commander-in-Chief directed operations and it was only in moments of serious crisis that Stalin intervened. But wherever he appeared nocturnal raids on the enemy were immediately organized and daring robberies and plundering of the enemy camp, all of which were characteristic of the guerrilla warfare in which Stalin, revolver in hand, played an active part. Meanwhile at the headquarters of the Tenth Army a regular hail of orders, telegrams, and directions poured in from the Field Marshal demanding Stalin's complete subordination to the central command. Stalin would read his senior officer's reports, grin sardonically, and write over them in red pencil, "To be disregarded!"

He would then hand the papers over to Voroshilov and proceed to discuss the details of the next raid with the ex-sergeant-major Budionny. This lack of discipline infuriated

Trotsky and he decided to go to Tsaritsyn himself, act the vengeful deity and establish order. He alleged that in so doing the thought of Stalin did not occur to him. "I hardly remembered his existence," he afterwards wrote somewhat ingenuously, "and was concerned only with the army at Tsaritsyn."

The conflict between Stalin and Trotsky threatened to become serious. In Tsaritsyn, surrounded by his comrades, Stalin found no difficulty in refusing to obey the Field Marshal, more particularly as the guerrilla warfare was meeting with considerable success in the neighbourhood and Stalin's attacks on the cavalry regiments of Krasnov, the Cossack general, were admired by all. It was only owing to the intervention of Lenin, who sent a trusted emissary to effect a reconciliation between Stalin and Trotsky, that it was possible for the two to work together in apparent harmony for a while. Stalin bowed to Lenin's ruling, and presented himself humbly in Trotsky's camp, pleaded eloquently on behalf of his faithful supporters to whom he referred as his "brave boys," and silently ignored Trotsky's rudeness. He left Tsaritsyn, but he never forgot this incident and his public humiliation. And his bitter loathing of Trotsky dates from that day. As soon as he came into power he rechristened Tsaritsyn, the city of his fame and of his humiliation, and called it Stalinsk.

Boiling over with hatred, he returned to Moscow. His routine work in the Council of War no longer satisfied him. "Here," he wrote savagely, "my duty is to clean out the stables of the higher command." As soon as he arrived he handed Lenin a long report on the situation in Tsaritsyn, and demanded to be given another command at the front.

Lenin, on whose table Trotsky's denunciations of Stalin were piling up, knew his Caucasian friend. Writing to Trotsky he said: "I think it is imperative to use every effort to co-operate with Stalin." Thus Trotsky too was now obliged to bow to authority, a long conversation took place between him and Stalin at headquarters and they were reconciled. But Stalin, in

order to justify his strategy, asked Lenin to give him a separate command. Even at this juncture, however, he refused to occupy the post officially. As usual he was satisfied with unofficial leadership.

The autumn of 1919 was a critical time for the Soviet Government. After the recall of Stalin, Tsaritsyn fell into the hands of Wrangel. Everybody thought that the Bolsheviks' days were numbered, and General Denikin, the leader of the White Army, issued his famous manifesto: "To Moscow!" The Bolsheviks' southern front crumpled up and they retreated in a disorderly torrent towards Moscow, while in their rear, quite close to Moscow, Mamontov, the White general, was sweeping along and destroying everything in his path. All Trotsky's strategical subtleties and attempts to catch him or outflank him were of no avail, for Mamontov was a master in the art of guerrilla warfare. Meanwhile Denikin had captured Kursk and his outposts had advanced to the outskirts of Orel. In Moscow the Commissars were as usual seized with panic. Trotsky's speeches, orders, and strategical plans were shown to be quite inadequate, and Stalin, who unhesitatingly declared that he could restore order along the front, suddenly acquired enormous prestige in the eyes of the leaders of the War Council. The independent command he demanded was now to be given him at the most threatened point along the Red front in the south, and even Trotsky acquiesced. As a matter of fact, the latter already regarded the situation as hopeless and suddenly forgot his hatred of the gloomy Asiatic and his own role as a fearless and intrepid Field Marshal.

Stalin, therefore, took over the southern front, but remembering Tsaritsyn, he had made his own terms. Trotsky was not to be allowed to interfere in any way along "Stalin's" front. The Field Marshal's orders were to extend only to the frontier line of the southern front. Lenin agreed, and to Trotsky's half-hearted objections, Stalin replied with the following short telegram: "Your attitude is merely obstinacy or, if you prefer it,

fractiousness of the most idiotic and dangerous kind!" The command of the southern front was placed in the hands of a committee from which Trotsky was entirely excluded and behind this committee was Stalin.

Thus began the most controversial period in the military career of the Caucasian guerrilla. Voroshilov, in his book, declares that it was the plan of campaign devised by Stalin that alone secured victory, but Trotsky again retorted in this case that Voroshilov's statement was a clumsy lie from beginning to end. Be this as it may, it is an undeniable fact that Denikin suffered his decisive defeat only after the recall of Trotsky, and that the southern army under the unofficial leadership of Stalin drove back the White troops from the neighbourhood of Moscow to the Black Sea. And thus the ultimate victory of the Red Army was secured. Stalin's name stands opposed to the Red Field Marshal's also in connexion with other fronts, in the north, against Yudenich, against the Poles, and elsewhere, though never as the official commander but merely as an adviser who always remained in the background. Even the majority of the Party never knew the real part he played. But by his reserve, his seeming indolence, and his conspirator methods, he made powerful enemies even at that time among his intellectual Party comrades. "Stalin's chief quality is laziness, and his second is uncontrollable envy of all those who know or can do more than he does," observed the schoolman Bukharin to Trotsky at this time.

By way of reward for his military achievements Stalin was given the Order of the Red Flag, the highest military distinction of Soviet Russia, and by the irony of fate the same resolution of the political bureau bestowed the same honour on Trotsky. Thus Stalin and Trotsky are recorded as having received the highest military distinction at the same moment. The investiture of prominent leaders with the Order of the Red Flag was at that time a solemn ceremony, carried out in the Grand Theatre in the presence of all the Soviet leaders and attended by all

the pomp that could possibly be displayed. Trotsky was then at the height of his fame, and he received an ovation when he appeared proudly on the stage, where he made an impassioned speech and received the Order amid loud cheers. Stalin, who should also have received the Order on the stage, did not even consider it necessary to put in an appearance at the theatre. Apparently he had more important duties to perform than to receive laurels, which meant nothing to him, in company with the official hero. But his name was read out and the only man in the whole hall who began to applaud enthusiastically was Comrade Trotsky, the hero of the day.

At that time Stalin's name was apparently almost unknown even to some of the Party leaders. Only a limited circle of the old Bolsheviks knew how to appreciate Stalin's importance to the Revolution at its real worth, and it was they who were responsible for the various efforts made to adjust the constant differences between him and Trotsky, which, as usually happened among Bolsheviks, degenerated into an exchange of the coarsest insults. The two came into touch with each other along the Polish, the southern, the Petrograd, and other fronts, and whenever they did so, a shower of telegrams would reach Moscow full of mutual recriminations, disclosures, and the like, in which Trotsky never failed to emphasize the fact that he, as Field Marshal, could not be expected to put up with such an obscure individual as Stalin.

"Remove Stalin and we shall conquer," wrote Trotsky. "Remove Trotsky and we shall conquer," growled Stalin. And it was only with the greatest difficulty that Lenin was able to smooth things over. Yet no more eloquent testimony could have been borne to Stalin's importance than the fact that both Lenin and Trotsky treated this alleged wholly unimportant person, whom one could not be expected to put up with and whom one "did not even notice," with the utmost consideration. In spite of everything, this "ignoramus" was obviously necessary and, although Stalin never appeared in a high command, and in the

flood of mutual exposure and insults it is impossible to get at the truth, Solomon's assertion that "Stalin forced Trotsky to be brave" does not appear to be exaggerated. And this happened in 1919 when Trotsky was at the zenith of his fame! Ten years later the glorious Field Marshal was expelled from the country by the "obscure and ignorant" Stalin, and his expulsion did not give rise to any particular sensation in Russia.

Stalin knows how to wait and suddenly to level his knock-out blow at the decisive moment. "Whenever Stalin was convinced that he was right he always contrived to do what he wanted without sparing anyone. He destroyed right and left, cut his way through and seized the leadership in his muscular hands. Such was Comrade Stalin in the years of the civil war, and he remained the same during the following years when the fight for Socialism was made." These words with which Voroshilov concludes his book on Stalin in the civil war require no explanation. Suffice it to add that Comrade Stalin remained exactly the same as he had been in the Caucasus, in the days of his Exes, and that as a man he did not change in any way except that his constant experience in war developed and confirmed his old qualities.

His rivalry with Trotsky was rooted in the profoundest emotions of his being as a conspirator. Concrete differences played very little part in the matter. In other circumstances and with other men their differences could hardly have led to enmity, for after all they were Party comrades and not European generals who are much more apt to behave like peacocks and prima ballerinas. Besides, in later years, their differences of opinion ceased to have any basis in fact. But it was impossible for Stalin to forget or forgive the period of the civil war, when Trotsky was at the height of his pride and fame. Trotsky was often warned about Stalin. "Stalin is spinning a web round you," Menshinsky told him. "Stalin is a bad man with yellow eyes," said Krestinsky. But Trotsky noticed nothing, saw nothing, thought of nothing except his own part in history. And this brought

about his downfall. "Stalin used to slink past me like a shadow," he afterwards wrote. "In the civil war I never noticed him." But Stalin took careful stock of Trotsky. This literary man with his demoniacal pointed beard and his Menshevik past was the incarnation of the world that Stalin hated, that theorizing world of intellectual Europe, with its views of relativity, its theatrical gestures and its culture based on pleasure-seeking and luxury. Two worlds, the old, lazy, fatalistic, experienced, and spiritually enlightened world of Asia, unshakable in its primeval strength, and the restless, scintillating, nervous, intellectual, and reflective world of Europe were confronting each other. In the person of Trotsky, Europe despised Stalin, the Asiatic. And Stalin's Asia requited this contempt with hatred. Asia conquered! Broad-shouldered fanatical hatred overcame slender-limbed haughty contempt!

Stalin never forgets but he is willing to learn. After his first conflicts with Trotsky, after the furious fighting in the civil war, he recognized that this upstart represented a certain power and exercised a certain not unimportant influence in Party circles with which even an old and deserving Activist like himself was bound to reckon. He therefore changed his tactics, with the result that there were no more open disputes and the mutual recriminations ceased. Stalin became once more immersed in his work and his devotion to Lenin seemed to be greater than ever. In the Political Bureau he suddenly ceased to put forward his individual opinions and for some time there was once again no more modest, silent, insignificant creature than Stalin. But deep down in the recesses of his Caucasian soul, his hatred was simmering. Secretly and with consummate caution, ever ready to retire into the background, Stalin was busy with the stupendous task of preparing Trotsky's downfall. With the utmost secrecy he chose his assistants and gathered together and supported Trotsky's enemies; for the stake in the great game was Russia, World Revolution, and dominion over a sixth of the globe!

Quietly and unobtrusively he began to spin his Oriental net

of conspiracy about Trotsky and, to use the old prison expression, set to work "to make him boil over."

It would have been a miracle if Trotsky, the literary man, had not allowed himself to be caught, for Stalin, the conspirator, did not know what failure was. He worked quietly, slowly, and long-sightedly. After the civil war, when the first signs of illness became apparent in Lenin, Stalin began the conspiracy which was to restore him once more to his rightful and original position as the leader of the Russian Communists, of which he had been deprived not by Lenin, the supreme god, but by the upstart Trotsky, and round him were grouped the old Comrades, the dull-witted, profoundly Russian Bolsheviks to whom the Activist meant more than the literary man.

MILITANT COMMUNISM

WHILE TROTSKY AND STALIN WERE FIGHTING AT THE FRONT AND the White generals and the blockade of the world Powers formed an iron ring round the land of the Soviets, Russia was in the throes of hunger, of a lofty ideology, of the Terror, and of that famous, much belauded, and much hated institution, militant Communism.

What is militant Communism? Does it mean the lightning establishment of Socialism?

When, with the help of the working classes of Petrograd, the little body of Communists attained to power they themselves were at a loss to know how to convert that power immediately into living Socialism. Neither Marx, Engels, Lenin, nor Trotsky offered any solution of the problem. Before he came into power, even Lenin regarded an immediate establishment of a socialistic order of society as more or less impossible.

On April 27, 1917, soon after his arrival in Petrograd, Lenin declared at a meeting of the All-Russian Bolshevik Conference: "The Social Revolution which is making good progress in the West cannot immediately be the order of the day in Russia." And in the resolution which was passed by the conference, we read: "The Russian proletarian, living in one of the most backward countries of Europe, where the masses consist of small peasant farmers, cannot aspire to the immediate establishment of Socialism."

A few months later, on November 1, 1917, Lenin declared at the meeting of the Petrograd Committee: "They tell us that

we wish to introduce Socialism. That is absurd. We do not want peasant Socialism." And all the prominent members of the Party shared this view. For instance, in one of his speeches, Radek declared: "The victory of the proletariat in *one* country is impossible." At the meeting of the Central Committee on January 11, 1918, one of the members summed up the general view regarding the prospects of Socialism in one country alone in the following words: "All speakers are unanimous on this point, that our Socialistic Republic is threatened with failure unless the World Revolution takes place." At the meeting of the Central Committee on February 23, 1917, even Stalin said: "We, too, are staking all on the Revolution in Western Europe; though we expect it not in a few months but in a few weeks' time."

In spite of the unanimous opinion that the ground was not ripe for Socialism in Russia, Lenin uttered his famous slogan only twenty-four hours after the October Revolution: "Full steam ahead to Socialism!" Nevertheless the paths leading to the goal were extremely obscure. Neither the past nor the theoretical treatises offered any help, and Trotsky was the first who, on grasping the situation, declared: "We must experiment!"

Such were the beginnings of militant Communism, the first attempt in the history of the world to establish Socialism, which, as we have seen, from the very first reckoned with the possibility of failure.

The path of militant Communism, or, it might almost be said, the sudden realization of one of Wells's utopian romances, was entered upon both in theory and practice directly after the October Revolution, and immediately led to a recognition of the fact that the more ideal the programme, the more brutal had to be the means of putting it into practice. A torrent of questionnaires, reports, regulations, and orders poured over Russia. In Petrograd, Moscow, and the towns and villages, the Cheka saw to it that they were properly received and observed. Never since the days of Peter the Great had the indolent Asiatic country been lashed into such feverish activity. Russia was declared over-

night to be a "Federative Republic of Workers" and was divided up into Communes. The various divisions of the population were classified according to their social utility, and the food rations were apportioned to each category according to this criterion, so that it might either flourish and multiply, just manage to survive, or gradually die out. The inhabitants of the country were allowed to move, eat, live, and die only in accordance with Government regulations. Everything was nationalized, even bed-clothes and coffins. Money was declared to be entirely superfluous, and the Cheka supervised the enforcement of these groping experimental regulations with unprecedented cruelty. Through the power of the State a fine utopian romance became a sinister reality.

Strange to say everything necessary for the maintenance of life gradually vanished. Members of every category of the population, including the experimenters, were running about the streets starving and in rags. The most fantastic callings came into being. At the corners of the main streets of Petrograd, there stood, full of the ardour of enterprise, the fortunate possessors of some contrivance for procuring a light, and anybody who wished to light a cigarette went up to them, paid the price demanded, and was allowed to get a light. Boxes of matches reached fabulous prices. The whole of Russia was employed by the State, and starved in company with the State. Now and again daring spirits would risk their lives and make one last attempt to go out into the country and exchange a few suits of clothes for a loaf or two in the outlying villages. But if they were caught at this crime they were executed within twenty-four hours. For the peasant too was a Government official and was allowed to sell his produce only to the Government.

The Cheka, or the "Special Commission for Combating the Counter-Revolution, Sabotage, and Breaches of Duty," worked night and day. Its aim was to bring about the physical annihilation of the bourgeois class, to shoot every Menshevik in the country, and to supervise the carrying out of the experiment.

Every day the prisoners were methodically killed by the thousand. At about this time a short notice appeared in the *Izvestia* signed by Lenin saying that both he and his wife were being inundated every day by appeals for mercy. "All such appeals are useless!" he declared in the official organ. At the same time Trotsky demanded the conscription of labour, that is to say, the conversion of all workers into soldiers, and their subjection to military discipline and compulsory work.

Gradually the whole country was seized with madness. Authors burned their books in their grates to warm their rooms. People ate the garbage from the pre-revolutionary dustbins, and the bestial satisfaction of hunger was in keeping with the bestial politics which culminated in the Cheka. The peasants ceased to sow. And thus the year 1921 dawned, the most terrible year in Russian history.

The sun poured down on the Volga. It poured down on to the steppes, the towns, and the villages. It burned the land for months. The air was sweltering and oppressive, the hot dust rose up from the ground, and the sky was veiled by a deep grey cloud that hung over the scorched soil. The golden globe of the sun poured its burning rays down on Russia and destroyed the harvest which in any case was a poor one. Thus began the starvation year of 1921, which cost the lives of a million and a half peasants. All was quiet on the Volga. The villages were empty, and the peasants migrated across the steppes to Turkestan and Siberia. Only very few reached their destination. People ate earth, leather, mice, and dung, and died in convulsions. Then the greatest horror of all occurred. All along the banks of the Volga in 1921 people ate the bodies of those who had died, mothers killed their children and devoured them. Husbands and wives would sit side by side waiting to see which would be the first to succumb to weakness and die, and the body of the deceased would supply the survivors with food.

The country was steering full steam ahead to Socialism. Regulations hailed down on the population and were enforced

by means of punitive expeditions. But still the experiment continued. Not one of the fundamental principles of Socialism was abandoned, except possibly that the experimenters, at their wits' end, accepted the help provided by super-capitalistic America and Dr. Nansen. The American Red Cross saved millions in Russia from death from starvation. But when the journalists asked Trotsky what he had to say about this greatest of all catastrophes in the history of the world, which after all was the result of an experiment, he replied flippantly: "It is the price that has to be paid for the Revolution." But it was America who paid the price! By some Trotsky's reply is regarded merely as a proof of his brilliant journalistic gifts.

But starvation, the gradual brutalization of Russia, and the rapid decay of the country failed to convince the leaders of the failure of the experiment. On the contrary! The lower the rouble sank, the greater the scarcity of food and the more intolerable conditions of life became, the nearer did they imagine was the realization of Socialism on earth and the more fanatically did they stride towards the distant goal which they were only just beginning dimly to discern on the horizon.

Disillusionment, however, came from an utterly unexpected and therefore all the more dangerous quarter. In the spring of 1921 it was not the starving populace nor the moribund bourgeoisie, nor even the Mensheviks in their dungeons who protested, but "the pride and ornament of the Revolution," the blue-jackets of Kronstadt. It was the guns of Kronstadt which put an end to the experiment. In the very port where in 1917 the blue-jackets had gone over in a body to the side of the Soviet and turned the scales in the case of the Petrograd *coup d'état*, the first great rising broke out inside Russia against the Bolsheviks. The blue-jackets of the most important naval port in the country arrested and imprisoned their Commissars, drove out the Soviet officials, and declared war to the death on the Bolsheviks. Their demands were—freedom to trade, free voting, abolition of capital punishment, freedom of the press, and the like. This rising was a

bolt from the blue. The democratic demands of the pride and ornament of the Revolution constituted a terrific blow to the central Soviet authorities. The rising was certain to spread like wildfire, and in a few days Petrograd would fall into the hands of the blue-jackets and the workers who joined them. The Soviet Government felt that its days were numbered. The spirit prevailing in the Kremlin was very similar to that which had existed after the abortive Petrograd insurrection of July. The leaders scattered asunder and a few of the lukewarm Communists quickly tore up their membership cards. The Commissars, pale as ghosts, ran hither and thither through the board rooms, awaiting the inevitable—the fall of Petrograd and a rising throughout Russia. In the streets, the guttersnipes were already singing the glad refrain: "Lenin and Trotsky went off in an aeroplane!"

Of the leaders who had suddenly become hysterical Stalin was the only man who kept his head. "Comrades, for Heaven's sake don't be hysterical," he implored the few who were still willing to listen to him. Among them was Lenin. He grasped the situation and turned to Stalin as the last hope of the Party. And it was not the executioners of the Cheka, nor the Red generals, who were entrusted with the suppression of the rising, but insignificant, taciturn Stalin together with Trotsky. But even here Stalin was not officially in command, and it was only when the rising was over that he undertook the settlement of affairs. Trotsky, the official hero, Stalin, and General Tukhachevsky advanced at the head of the most privileged and most carefully picked Soviet troops against the insurgents. Eyewitnesses declare that at this juncture Stalin developed into a regular engine of cruelty. It was still mid-winter in Kronstadt. The men of the Red Army in their white tunics advanced over snow and ice and across frozen rivers against the greatest fortress in Russia. Behind the army followed the cream of Communism, the troops of the Cheka, equipped with heavy guns and machine guns, so that in the event of failure on the part of the army they could break

up the ice under the feet of the fugitives—Kronstadt lies on an island in the Gulf of Finland—and make flight impossible. Such were the mechanical means that Trotsky and Stalin employed to force their troops to deeds of heroism.

In spite of ice and snow and the desperate resistance of the blue-jackets, the workers, and the soldiers, the Soviet troops were victorious and with Comrade Birn, their official commander, at their head, they entered the fortress. The cream of the army, the special detachment of the Cheka, set to work, and meanwhile Trotsky wrought havoc in Petrograd. Stalin now revealed himself in all his glory. He gave no quarter, and knew neither leniency nor mercy. Kronstadt, cut off from the rest of the world, was surrounded by troops that had remained loyal, and the judges proceeded to give vent to their fury. It is said that not a single insurgent escaped from Kronstadt alive. A few blue-jackets alone managed to convey the news of the bloody termination of the rising to people abroad.

The Communist Party suffered from no lack of members capable of the most ghastly cruelty, and it is extremely significant that with so many to choose from it was precisely Stalin who was selected. Apparently even the most gifted members of the Cheka could not compete with his impersonal, utterly inhuman, and instinctive Asiatic cruelty.

Kronstadt proved the turning point in the history of Communism. Lenin took the warning to heart. The experiment had obviously failed.

While Stalin was still dealing with the rising, and the last shots were being fired in Kronstadt, Lenin was explaining the policy of the so-called “Nep” (New Economic Programme), before the tenth meeting of the Party Congress. “We must learn our business from the Capitalists; we must learn to trade; we must radically alter our position for some time to come.” Strange to say these observations of Lenin, so incompatible with all that had been proclaimed before, gave rise to unmistakable enthusiasm among the majority of the members. Apparently

they had grown tired of the Revolution. Even Trotsky, who had not yet recovered from the fright the rising had given him, wholeheartedly supported Lenin.

Such was the end of militant Communism, one of the strangest and most hare-brained experiments in history. And as the excitement died down and something approaching normal conditions was restored, the more apparent became the tendency which Trotsky contemptuously dubbed "Epigonism." Lazy, indolent Russia, the vast Asiatic despot-ridden country, was dead tired and was taking a rest.

"'Nep' is a pause for taking breath," said Lenin.

But for Russia and for most of the Communist circles Nep meant a return to normal conditions in a normal country, an opportunity for reaping the advantages the Revolution had conferred upon the individual. It was about this time that Stalin's face first began to loom above the horizon in Russia.

THE ROAD TO POWER

HOW DOES A MAN ATTAIN TO POWER? THE ANSWER USUALLY GIVEN is simple enough. A man attains to power by unfurling a red flag in a picturesque attitude on the barricades; or by entering the capital on a white horse at the head of brave troops and making proclamations in the presence of the cheering populace; or by organizing a conspiracy in dark subterranean catacombs, plunging a dagger into the heart of the ruling tyrant at the right moment, and usurping his place; or else by making impassioned speeches which are vociferously applauded by the people and move them to raise the speaker to the seat of power.

There may possibly be countries in which power is won in this way. But in Russia such theatrical methods have never succeeded. In this vast indolent country power is only won slowly, step by step, almost imperceptibly. The theatrical epilogue that follows merely confirms a long established fact. The Tsar was overthrown only months after the real power had passed unnoticed into the hands of the Duma; even Kerensky was not overthrown until everybody had long been aware that all the power had been seized by the rampant Soviets. Stalin's road to power was just as imperceptible, gradual, and silent. In fact it is impossible to fix the exact hour, day, or month from which his dictatorship dates. It began in the early days of the Nep, when peace was established at home and a new, somewhat uncouth, but all the more efficient bourgeoisie came into being, when the State introduced the vodka monopoly and gaming houses, and Bukharin uttered the brief slogan "Grow rich!" The Revolution was

over and the Bolsheviks proclaimed this fact in the words: "Slow down the speed of Socialism!" The leaders of the Revolution, all those who had fought for it, now hoped to reap their harvest, either by being placed in the privileged caste, or by being allowed to lead a life of luxury without let or hindrance.

Revolutionary enthusiasm died down. The revolutionaries of yesterday were suddenly converted into ordinary creatures, anxious to safeguard their just rights and privileges, and to cease having anything in common with suspicious adventurers. From their own point of view the Bolsheviks felt they had earned the right to a privileged existence by their years of fighting, their incredible privations, and their constant dread of disaster. And they insisted on enforcing their rights. It had become a privilege to be a member of the Party. As a caste, the Red aristocracy was not so very different from the old official aristocracy. During the period of the Nep, the Party had organized itself on the pattern of an ordinary State. It absorbed all the functions of the State, and found its highest expression in a bureaucracy and in an executive and political machine which henceforward became supreme. The Soviet system, in which the Party as such had at first played only a subordinate part, was gradually set aside, and in its place arose the bureaucratic dictatorship of a select caste. Thus membership in the Party made every individual a repository of power. On the same principle, every Bolshevik and everything connected with him depended for his success and position in life upon the favour of the Party. The closer a man was in touch with the central authority of the Party (not of the State), the more plain did the all-powerful position of the supreme organization of the Party, the Party as the machinery of State, appear. And if he happened to be part of this machinery, he exercised absolute power over the rest of the Party, which in its turn, as an exclusive caste, deliberately exploited for its own ends what the Revolution had won for it. Suddenly it became extremely difficult to become a member of the Party. The caste was complete, the process of selection had come to an end. And

now began the famous “removals” which made the whole machine tremble; for to be removed from the Party was tantamount to political death.

But who constituted the Party, the select caste which now ruled over Russia? When the civil war was over and the atmosphere it had created had been dissipated, it was possible to analyse the once fluid constituents of the Party. The majority of its members belonged to the lowest strata of the population, working people, inhabitants of the suburban quarters of the city, common lower middle-class people, whom Bolshevism had freed from traditional prejudices and for which it had substituted the unabashed cynicism of emancipated Philistinism. They were people who had no traditions and no past, coarse, callous, sullen creatures from the interior of Russia, from the steppes, who for centuries had been enslaved, or from the small towns and the outskirts of the larger towns. Their intelligence was extremely limited, and barely sufficed to enable them to understand the most elementary revolutionary ideas. They fought for the Revolution because they hated the Russia of the old days, and because in a dull, bestial, and instinctive way they felt “Our day has now come!” They fought and struggled valiantly, with all the old Tatar and primeval Russian tenacity, which could be read in their very movements, in their broad Slav-Tatar faces, and their small slanting slits of eyes. They seized the power with their coarse bony hands, held fast hold of it and, in their traditional Slav manner, were prepared blindly to serve those who promised to safeguard their privileges and keep them in power in Russia. Very few of them could read and write properly, their skulls were too thick, their backs too broad, and their fingers too knotty and stiff. They had not the remotest idea what the Internationalism meant on which Bolshevism was founded, but they were extremely proud of their country, the first Socialist and most progressive power in the world.

The undisguised Nationalism of emancipated bourgeois and commonplace people, who are accustomed to despise everything

that is foreign or incomprehensible to them, could be discerned in their primitive features.

These people wished for nothing more. They had achieved all they wanted to achieve. Cynically and sullenly, they clung to their Party, yearning for a leader who was the perfect expression of their own natures. It was their common fate to live oppressed by fear. Any day a heedless adventurer might arise who would precipitate the catastrophe which would bring them to the gallows. The man who was profoundly alien to them all, although at first perhaps they hated him only unconsciously, was Trotsky, the man from another sphere, the intellectual Jew, the European, who was always urging them on to fresh adventures, who preached Revolution as a perpetual condition, and refused to allow anyone time to stop and take breath. These people, of whom the Party was mainly composed, were fundamentally opposed to the intellect, and declined to learn anything about it or to have anything to do with it.

It was this class that now ruled over Russia, created its literature, its theatre, and its ideology, all of which breathed the bestial boredom and staggering vapidness of its self-complacent Philistinism. At the close of the civil war, which for a brief spell had welded the Party together, the old traditional disclosures of "class-enemies" once more began to be made by the members of the Party against each other; pointless dialectical disputes took place, charges were brought against all who were not in entire agreement with the views of the Party, while all who retained a vestige of personal freedom and dared to think and feel for themselves were objects of hatred. Incessant intrigues, perpetual inquiries into other people's thoughts, words, and allusions, the suspicion that persons might exist who, although they were Bolsheviks, dared to entertain thoughts and feelings other than those dictated by the Party, constituted the sole intellectual occupation of all Bolsheviks of the right stamp.

The old atmosphere of Bolshevism in exile began to revive and the bond of union between all these people was their fear

of the incomprehensible—of Comrade Trotsky, for instance, who, for all they knew, might any day organize a military rising with the support of the army, seize the reins of power, and revive the period of militant Communism.

The highest living expression of this Bolshevik class was Stalin with his idea of Socialism in *one* country, and an Empire under a centralized Government.

Stalin is the only complete Bolshevik of worldly dimensions. He possesses all the qualities of the average man of the Party as described above, but in him these qualities—indomitable will power, narrowness of outlook, primitive coarseness, and brutal cynicism—are developed to titanic proportions. "Stalin is the most prominent average man in the whole Party," Trotsky once declared. And it was on a broad basis of mediocrity that he laid the foundations of his dictatorship.

Stalin's rise to power first became visible at the tenth Congress of the Party, at which he appeared as the victor of Kronstadt. It seemed quite natural that Zinoviev, the ruler of Petrograd and the leader of the Petrograd Soviet, should propose him as a candidate for the exalted post of General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, which had just been created. It is said that at the time Lenin was opposed to Stalin's candidature. He may have regarded the sullen Georgian as a somewhat uncanny representative of the dull mass of the Party. "This chef will cook us bitter dishes," he observed somewhat ironically.

Nevertheless he did not oppose Stalin openly, for he attached no political importance to the post of General Secretary. As a matter of fact it did not carry much weight, being neither a Government post nor a leading political post within the Party. Its duties were more of a technical nature, and consisted of the mechanical execution of the decisions of the Central Committee. In this bureaucratic position, close to Lenin and under his constant supervision, it was thought that Stalin could hardly exercise much personal influence.

And yet this post of General Secretary became for Stalin the one in which he has contrived to exercise the power of dictator to this day. True, as General Secretary he received orders from the Central Committee, but at the same time he had to make himself conversant with all political questions, and the whole of the administrative machinery of the State and the Party. Indeed, in connexion with unimportant technical questions the Secretary was even permitted to reach independent decisions, without being obliged at all times to refer the matter to the Central Committee or the Political Bureau.

Thus as far as the machinery of Government, the political Commissars, his district colleagues, and even the smallest independent groups were concerned, the General Secretary was the supreme bureaucratic authority for all the officials of the Party. It is true that the mass of the Party never heard of him. Only a very few knew him even by name, merely because the majority did not take much interest in the Party bureaucracy. Under Lenin's leadership Stalin could not of course exercise much power, in spite of his work within the Party machine. A brief note from Lenin would at any moment have sufficed to destroy his position as a member of the Party for ever. But Lenin wrote this short note of excommunication only on his deathbed, when Stalin had not much difficulty in suppressing it. Meanwhile, although Lenin undoubtedly disapproved occasionally of Stalin's bureaucratic zeal, he regarded him as on the whole a convenient, dutiful official on whose phlegmatic stolidness he could as a rule rely with greater confidence than on Trotsky with his mercurial disposition.

Gradually Stalin contrived to make his influence felt both in the policy of the Party and the personal concerns of its members. To help him he had the organizing bureau of the Party, which, like his own department, also dealt with the settlement of technical questions, and he collected round him a number of leaders who imagined they had a grievance against the Revolution or felt insecure in their positions. Stalin selected these future ac-

complices with the utmost skill and caution. Foremost among them were Zinoviev, Kameniev, Dzerzhinsky, and Ordjonikidze, none of whom would by any means have been prepared to recognize him as leader. For after all Zinoviev, as head of the Petrograd Soviet, was the absolute ruler of the working masses of that city, while Kameniev held a similar position in Moscow. With the support of these two men, Stalin could rely upon the two capitals. Though for the moment he had no definite plan in mind and merely in order to be prepared for emergencies, Stalin felt it imperative gradually to draw closer to these leaders of the masses, over which he knew that as yet he had no influence. Dzerzhinsky too was a useful man. He was a Pole, and an old revolutionary, well acquainted with exile and the inside of prisons, who, in the years of the Red Terror had shown his loyalty to the Party in the most terrible way as supreme head of the Cheka, the leader of the bloodiest reign of terror in history. During the period of the Nep, Dzerzhinsky found himself in a wretched plight. The Terror had to be abated, and the Party appointed him director of some agricultural undertaking of which he understood nothing. He felt himself neglected and disgraced. As his temperament constituted his one asset and he had not an idea in his head, he was sincere in his admiration of Stalin whom he regarded as a great man, and the latter contrived to find a use for the fading laurels of this organizer of the Terror. The fourth member of the coalition was the Caucasian Ordjonikidze, an old friend on whom Stalin could rely absolutely and who was still ready to embark on any daring venture.

Every day reports, queries, and requests from the whole Party were piled high on the table of the Gensec (General Secretary), and Stalin studied them eagerly. By means of insignificant little favours and equally intangible acts of hostility, he gradually surrounded himself by a body of picked men who, united within the bureaucracy, soon constituted a by no means despicable force. Naturally it was impossible for Lenin to supervise every detail in person. He was responsible for the broad



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policy of the Party, while the details, the domestic policy, were gradually taken over by the conscientious Gensec, who immured behind his high bureaucratic wall was apparently cut off from all knowledge of Government affairs and the activities of those who really wielded the official power. But those who knew Stalin during this period could see how carefully he studied the innumerable decisions of the political bodies, and could hear him mutter sullenly to himself, "Inconsistencies! Inconsistencies!" as he bowed his head menacingly. For months he was engaged in mechanically executing the decisions of the Central Committee, and soon acquired a certain familiarity with political questions and secretly formed his own opinion on all political problems.

It was obvious to him that Lenin was trying gradually to demolish the system of dictatorship, that he no longer believed in pure Socialism, and was steering the country towards the Liberalism that Stalin loathed. His fanaticism could not tolerate half measures and when he had to choose between Lenin and Socialism he decided in favour of Socialism as he understood it.

He was careful at first not to give open expression to his views. Nor can he be said by any means to have thought his own ideas out to their ultimate conclusion. His long-cherished secret desire was to play Kameniev and Zinoviev, and, if everything turned out well, Lenin also, against Trotsky, but to keep in the background himself, so that from his safe retreat he could rub his hands with glee after the fall of the Field Marshal. But for this he required the machinery of the Party and he did not trouble his head about what was to follow.

But gradually and at first only in Lenin's most intimate circle and even then in whispers, the cry of alarm was raised: "Lenin is ill! Lenin is in a bad way!" In fear and trembling, the members of the Party whispered the news in each other's ears, and anxiously followed Lenin with their eyes, only to add: "He staggered! He can no longer stand upright. His hands tremble!"

Nobody knew exactly what Lenin's illness was. The royalist

exiles declared that it was syphilis, while the Mensheviks gave it the less offensive appellation of general paresis. His Party intimates wrapped themselves in silence. Only now and again would one of them who was perhaps qualified to speak, say, "He is over-tired" and then give a list of all the organs in his body which were sound—his heart, his lungs, his liver, and so on. And they comforted themselves by telling each other, "He'll live to be a hundred yet!" The mass of the Party believed that the fate of the Revolution, of the Party, and of the Soviet power, depended upon Lenin's health. Nobody dared to refer to the question of his successor, the possibility of his death appeared so incredible, so utterly insensate! Moreover, everybody felt certain that the whole Party might easily go to ruin over the question of the succession. Tentatively a few names were mentioned—Trotsky, Kameniev, and others. But they were immediately set aside as being too impossible, so absurd did it seem that these people could ever wield Lenin's authority. Not once was Stalin's name mentioned. Apparently no one, not even his allies Zinoviev and Kameniev ever thought of the insignificant Party tool. Even Stalin himself at that time can hardly have contemplated stepping into Lenin's shoes and becoming President of the Council of the People's Commissars.

Suddenly, and quite unexpected by all, the catastrophe occurred. Lenin had his first stroke! This was in May 1922, just before the eleventh Party Congress. The news created a panic in the Kremlin. The unfailing source from which the Party had hitherto drawn all its wisdom was apparently on the point of running dry. Nobody attended to business; all eyes were turned on Gorki, the village near Moscow where Lenin was living at the time. In the Kremlin, the interregnum had begun. The People's Commissars and the members of the Central Committee stood helpless before the political problems that confronted them. Fortunately for them in these difficult days the bureaucratic bodies placed themselves unreservedly at their disposal for the discharge of the daily routine work. During the interregnum

no one cared about current business, and it was provisionally undertaken by the department which until then had merely executed Lenin's orders but which now, without proclaiming the fact, was to continue to issue orders although they were no longer given by Lenin. This department was none other than that of the General Secretary, the Gensec, Stalin! Thus did he come automatically into power!

Lenin did not get on to his legs again until July, but by that time everybody knew that the question of the succession had become acute. Lenin's days were numbered!

But he still lived. He still had the power!

THE GEORGIAN QUESTION

IN MARCH 1923 STALIN STRODE THROUGH THE KREMLIN WITH HEAD bowed and brow puckered, talking in a loud hoarse voice. He was speaking Georgian and the subject he was discussing was Georgia. Beside him strode his dignified old comrade in arms, Ordjonikidze, also apparently absorbed in gloomy thought.

"We must make a wholesale clearance at home," declared Stalin gruffly. "We must make an end of Georgia!" Suddenly he stopped short and put an arm amicably round Ordjonikidze's neck. "Do you understand, Sergo," he said in the dialect of the Tiflis gutter, "this is a departure from first principles, it is chauvinism! They are forgetting the Party's general line of policy!" Then quickly, and with obvious emotion, he began to explain the Georgian question to his friend. "At home in Georgia we have National minorities amounting to thirty per cent of the population—Armenians, Mohammedans, Ossetes," he said, emphasizing the word Ossetes. "In our capital of Tiflis the Georgians number only twenty-five per cent—a fine capital indeed! And do you know what Makharadze said to me? They would like to turn all the Armenians out of Tiflis! And what will happen to Gori? To the Ossetes? Budu Mdivani regards them as uncivilized, as of minor importance, as people not worth considering! But surely, Sergo, this is a very serious departure from principle! True, the Nationalist problem could be solved as it was in Sangesur, or in Karabagh, by stamping out the minorities. But that is not a Communist solution of the question. Now these little peoples at home have refused to form a

federation either with Armenia or with Azerbaijan. They would like to remain independent, you see. With their ports and their railways, they would like to be excluded, so that they can bring pressure to bear on their neighbours. I tell you, Sergo, that we must make a clearance of them. I know these people. They start with revolutionary slogans and end with Nationalism."

Stalin paused for a moment, took breath, and then added sternly: "The federation between the Caucasian peoples must be compulsorily effected, and all attempts at independence must be nipped in the bud! The independent Commissar offices, such as those for foreign trade, must as far as possible be closed, and the administration transferred to the central department in Moscow. In short, local Nationalism in our part of the world must be forcibly converted into Communism!" Again he paused and then concluded somewhat ironically: "Yes, that is the Communist solution of the Nationalist question!"

Sergo Ordjonikidze listened attentively to his friend. It was not his habit to contradict him. "But who is to make this clearance in our part of the world?" he asked. Stalin thought a moment. "He will have to be a Georgian," he replied, "a man who knows the country well. The best man would be yourself."

The following day Sergo went to Tiflis. Before leaving he paid Stalin one last visit and the fundamental principles to be observed in clearing out Georgia were again discussed in detail. "Supposing I should be asked what Georgia's independence as a State will amount to in future?" asked Sergo, as he was about to take his leave, "what shall I say?" Stalin smiled reproachfully. "Haven't you read the constitution of the Union? Every party to it, including Georgia, of course, may by exercising the right of self-determination withdraw from the Union of Soviet Republics. Isn't that independence?" Both men laughed gleefully. The exercise of the right of self-determination presupposed the possibility of free choice. But as long as there was a dictatorship in the Party this need give rise to no anxiety.

Ordjonikidze set to work in Georgia with true bureaucratic

zeal. The feeble Georgian opposition was brutally expelled from the Party, the policy of separation was ruthlessly stifled, and a little party quarrel provoked by Ordjonikidze's practised hand led the Georgian question into the desired channel.

Stalin remained in Moscow. The Georgian question was the first great problem which he settled independently behind Lenin's back. True, Lenin had already returned to work. But his old energy had left him. He was growing weaker and weaker, and the business which the General Secretary was able to settle without his knowledge increased every day.

The relations between Lenin and the old Activist had undergone a great change since the October Revolution. In the days of exile Lenin had regarded Stalin as a remote Caucasian Comrade of limited intelligence who was both brave and reliable, and whom he occasionally showed some sign of graciousness in return for the slavish devotion with which Stalin served him. To Stalin Lenin was almost a god, who as the supreme authority could decide all earthly problems with perfect wisdom.

The Revolution had drawn them nearer to each other but it had also estranged them. In the early days, when Stalin was living in the Caucasus it had been a joy for him to receive and carry out the orders that reached him from time to time from Lenin, but now that these orders poured in daily and Lenin, with a wave of his hand, could set aside all Stalin's complicated bureaucratic measures, the latter often felt irritated. Lenin was ill. He was lying weak and emaciated in his room in the Senate, or the Law Courts. Not far away, in the cavalry barracks, lay Trotsky, who was also ill. But the construction of the State, of the Communist World Empire, had not yet been completed, and Stalin felt called upon to perfect the structure. Disquieting news was coming in from every quarter, and not merely from abroad. Even at home people seemed only to be waiting for Lenin's death in order to take steps against the Soviets. In Georgia too that honest fool Budu Mdivani was daring to demand a certain

measure of independence. Stalin felt the time had come to act ruthlessly, for the bureaucratic machine quickly to seize the reins of power, and for the dictatorship of the Party definitely to supplant the official Soviet system. Moreover, he had not altogether pleasant recollections of Georgian politics. Though he was a dying man, Lenin watched every turn of the Party machine with a vigilant eye. "What is happening in Georgia?" he asked Stalin.

Stalin replied by lying, by giving false information, because he knew that Lenin would not tolerate any severity towards old Communists. Lenin was cut off from the world, he was forbidden to discuss politics! He must never know what Stalin was doing behind his back and what he was proposing to do in Georgia without the knowledge of the Central Committee.

But suddenly the bomb burst quite unexpectedly. The Georgian Communists with Budu Mdivani at their head, arrived from the south with a long written indictment of Stalin and Ordjonikidze. It was a tale of brutal persecution, unscrupulousness, and a disregard of services rendered to the Party, all carried on under cover of the Central Committee's authority. They did not accuse him of anything more. Lenin, the sick and dying Master, was indignant. He had not expected this bare-faced deception from Stalin, and he summoned up all his remaining strength for a last decisive blow.

But first he wished for an explanation from Stalin against whom this severe indictment had been brought. He had almost reached the end of his tether and was seeing nobody, and his wife W. K. Krupskaya undertook the negotiations with Stalin. She went to see him in his room. "Lenin wishes to have all the papers relating to the Georgian question at once," she told him. "The Comrades from Georgia put a very different complexion on the matter from what you did." Stalin's face darkened. So he had been exposed! It was impossible for him to produce any papers that would exonerate him. His Georgian blood flew to his head,

and springing to his feet, he replied with a single sentence which was the most vulgar insult that could possibly be hurled in the Russian language. This was in March 1923.

That same day Lenin informed Stalin that he would have nothing more to do with him. * "I am horrified by the bureaucratic procedure of Stalin and Ordjonikidze," he wrote to Budu Mdivani, "and I shall protect you." It was suggested that a compromise should be made, but Lenin would not agree to it. "Stalin will make a sham compromise and then cheat us again," he said. Filled with all the energy of the old conspirator, Lenin resolved to take steps against Stalin at the twelfth Congress which was on the point of meeting. Trotsky was sent for and told to support his sick chief. "I shall deal Stalin his death-blow!" cried Lenin. But he was only a tired old man who hardly had the strength left to strike a well-aimed blow, and his determination to dispose finally of Stalin before the Party lasted only a few hours. Then, as his condition continued to grow worse and as a Party Congress was about to take place in Georgia also, he made up his mind to settle at least this question of principle in his own way. The blow against Stalin's policy in Georgia was to be levelled by Kameniev, and Trotsky was entrusted with the task of making him carry out Lenin's instructions.

Kameniev who, in conjunction with Zinoviev and Stalin, had already hatched a plot against Trotsky, was obviously embarrassed when at Lenin's orders he appeared before Trotsky. He trembled in his shoes. The whole plot had apparently been frustrated by one short note from Lenin. And Kameniev resolved to save what little there was left to save, which in this case was chiefly himself. He agreed to everything, listened

* Lenin's last letter to Stalin was the last he ever wrote. It contains sentences like these: "I must appeal to the Party as a whole and demand your expulsion from its ranks. You are not fit to be a Communist."—"Your rudeness exceeds all bounds and culminates in the drunken lust of power of an Abdul-Hamidian satrap."—"Your aim is to scale to the pinnacle of power just to amuse yourself there," etc.

quietly and humbly to Trotsky's haughty denunciation, blushed like a schoolboy caught red-handed, and thanked Trotsky most effusively when the latter promised not to take steps against Stalin, Zinoviev, and himself provided that all three were entirely subservient to him. At this interview Trotsky showed great mildness and thus, while Lenin was struggling with death, all the Diodachi were going about on tip-toe with apprehension.

Immediately after his interview with Trotsky, Kameniev hastened to Stalin, in order to persuade him also to adopt a compliant attitude. But Stalin did not seem to be in the least perturbed. True, he wrote a letter to Lenin's wife, begging her to forgive the rudeness of an old Bolshevik, but at heart he seemed for some reason or other to be quite calm and serene.

"We must eat humble pie!" stammered Kameniev in great agitation. But in spite of his letter of apology Stalin did not seem inclined to yield. Did he know more than the others about the Master's condition? "You go to Tiflis for the time being," he said to Kameniev, "and we shall see what happens." Stalin, the old conspirator, held the trump cards! He knew that Lenin would never see the next meeting of the Party. So Kameniev went to Tiflis to attend the Congress of the Georgian Party.

In his pocket he had the speech prepared by Trotsky and Lenin, which made short shrift of Stalin's Nationalist policy and offered protection to the Communists who had received disciplinary punishment from Ordjonikidze. But Kameniev never delivered this speech at the Georgian Congress. On the contrary, from the platform in Tiflis he passionately defended all the measures adopted by Ordjonikidze and Stalin. Had Stalin also furnished him with the draft of a speech?

The Georgian Nationalist Communists, with Budu Mdivani at their head, were now in any case officially doomed! What had happened? A few hours before the opening of the Congress, Kameniev received a telegram in cipher from Stalin consisting only of one line: "Lenin has had another stroke." Kameniev

immediately understood what this meant. Stalin was saved! It is said that when the *Pravda* printed Kameniev's speech, Stalin, to be on the safe side, had a dozen copies printed in which Kameniev's speech appeared in the form prescribed by Lenin. If the Master had recovered consciousness and inquired about Georgia, Stalin could have shown him these sham copies.

The Georgian question, in which Lenin adopted a friendly and Stalin an unfriendly attitude towards the Georgian people, might have proved fatal to Stalin. But Lenin's stroke saved the situation. And now the second interregnum began, during which the General Secretariat once again, though on this occasion armed with more experience, took over the conduct of everyday affairs. But this time Lenin did not recover. The twelfth Congress of the Party met in his absence and Stalin's resolution concerning Nationalist questions was accepted. The burden of this resolution was the centralization of the Soviet power, and the stamping out of local Nationalist movements in favour of a world Empire organized on strict bureaucratic lines.

Thus did Stalin, the Georgian, destroy the local independence of Georgia. And he did not forget Budu Mdivani who had been responsible for placing him in the most critical position he had ever occupied in all his life. He was given the post of trade representative in Persia, and there, as an idealist entirely ignorant of commercial matters, he was caught in the toils of profiteering swindlers. He was then officially exposed, expelled from the Party, and banished to Siberia. At the present moment he is languishing in one of the gloomiest dungeons in Siberia. Stalin knows how to wait and how to wreak his vengeance!

Lenin's illness brought Stalin nearer and nearer to the seat of power. As General Secretary he had the right to issue orders and to back them with the authority of the Central Committee. During the time that both Lenin and Trotsky were lying ill in bed, it gradually came about that it was not the Central Committee that gave Stalin his orders but *vice versa*; in fact the

Central Committee actually asked him what orders he wished to be given!

Stalin had attained to power long before anyone was aware of the fact. The absence of Lenin and Trotsky through illness was the first step, after which the conspiracy against Trotsky made a state of affairs, already long established, obvious to all.

THE CONSPIRACY

THE LEADERS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION GOT RID OF EACH OTHER by means of the guillotine. The Russian Revolution substituted gossip for the guillotine. It took longer but was less noticeable though none the less brutal on that account.

Thus even Trotsky was gradually caught and found himself entangled in the net which the three men, Zinoviev, Kameniev, and Stalin, the rulers of Petrograd, Moscow, and the Party machine, had laid for him. The conspiracy organized by this trio was very clever and, apart from their personal hatred of Trotsky, was prompted by the fact that rightly or wrongly they were convinced that the Red Field Marshal, who was still the head of the army, would forcibly seize the reins of power after Lenin's death.

By taking precautions in good time, it was hoped to forestall his plans for a rising, which everybody was convinced would take place. The Party were seriously preoccupied with this menace, not because there were any positive indications of it, but because at that time it would, as a matter of fact, have been perfectly easy for Trotsky, with the help of the Red Army, to make himself master in a few hours. It never entered into anybody's head that the other three men could do likewise, and they consequently set to work all the more eagerly. Step by step Trotsky was excluded from all direct connexion with the mass of the Party. At the conferences, in the Party groups, at meetings, and elsewhere his part—the part of the visible incarnation of the Revolution—was taken by Kameniev and Zinoviev.

The names of these two men were extraordinarily popular. They had been mentioned in conjunction with those of Lenin and Trotsky during the days of October. And now they took the place of these two leaders. The reasons for this were plausible enough. Lenin was dying, Trotsky at this time was constantly ill, and the natural enthusiasm of the conference vented itself automatically on the next in order of seniority. Stalin did not come to the fore. As usual he knew, even at this juncture, the right part to play. The revolutionary mob knew him only by name and he confined himself to guiding the Party machine which was officially under his control. The struggle was not yet carried into the open. On the contrary, the plan of campaign was to provoke Trotsky publicly to seize Lenin's heritage which would provide the conspirators with a powerful weapon against him. At the meeting of the Political Bureau, shortly before the opening of the twelfth Congress of the Party, the question as to who should read the usual political report at the Congress in Lenin's place was discussed.

"Trotsky, of course!" said Stalin blandly. Trotsky modestly protested, declaring that it would be tactless to put anybody in Lenin's place so soon. Moreover he did not quite see eye to eye with the Political Bureau.

"In what way?" demanded Stalin contemptuously. Immediately after the meeting, Kameniev and Stalin went about among the old Bolsheviks, and whispered indignantly, "Trotsky wishes to deliver the political report; he is obviously striving after power! Are you going to look on, Comrades, while he becomes the sole ruler of the Party and of the State—our Soviet State?"

The old Bolsheviks who did not belong to a class overburdened with brains were obviously shocked and their opinion carried considerable weight in Party circles. In the end Zinoviev read the political report.

The gradual isolation of Trotsky who, after Lenin, was the first man in Russia, was by no means easy, and its accomplish-

ment was one of Stalin's most masterly feats in conspiracy. A regular plot was hatched in the Political Bureau. The members who took part in it agreed gradually to oust Trotsky and to prevent him from taking any part in the activities of the Party, and everything was discussed unofficially at preliminary meetings in Trotsky's absence. At the official meeting which subsequently took place at his house, he could argue for hours until the sweat ran down his face, without making the slightest impression on his listeners. He lay helpless in the Kremlin, a prey to various ailments, while round him the conspiracy grew and spread.

Stalin levelled one blow after the other. As General Secretary he conducted the ordinary business of the day, and in the Political Bureau and the Central Committee, Kameniev and Zinoviev supported him with the full weight of their authority. The steering wheel was in his hands. The slightest touch, a nod, a hint, was enough! The bureaucratic engine was cleverly manipulated, the personnel was gradually shifted about and those who were suspected of being Trotsky's supporters were transferred to uninfluential positions, while men from the docile rank and file of the Party, who were anxious to profit by the Revolution, were appointed in their place. In the proclamations to the people, in the election of honorary chairmen, in calls for cheers, and so on, the names of Kameniev and Zinoviev were unostentatiously substituted for that of Trotsky, and whereas until that time his name had always come first the lists of leaders were now printed in alphabetical order. Later on this too was altered and Zinoviev and Kameniev came first while Trotsky's name appeared last of all. Now and again his name would be omitted altogether, and in its place, at the tail end, as though by way of an after-thought, would stand the name of old Comrade Stalin.

When some of the Party protested against this cavalier treatment of Trotsky's name, Stalin explained with matter of fact Marxian logic that although Trotsky was held in the highest esteem, consistent Marxians could not consent to the glorifica-

tion of any single individual. All those who understood these delicate hints could reckon with certainty on a brilliant career in the Party machine. And thus the number of conspirators grew day by day.

"We must oppose Trotsky's attempt to make himself dictator," declared Zinoviev. And thus in the Party groups, in the district circles and Government organizations, and right up to the Political Bureau, a secret plot was hatched by Trotsky's enemies.

Stalin, in whose hands the long interregnum placed ever more and more power, saw to it that in every group in the Party there was an inner ring of conspirators, while Kameniev and Zinoviev undertook the ideological elaboration of the case. Thus the campaign against Trotsky was carried on from within by Stalin's Party machinery, and from without by the propaganda conducted by Zinoviev and Kameniev. Meanwhile Trotsky himself, who still possessed enough power to annihilate his enemies, lay helpless in the Kremlin, in the grip of a high fever, and surrounded by spies and conspirators. It was two external circumstances that brought about his downfall—the interregnum and his illness, which enabled Stalin to form outside the official bureau his own unofficial political organ of conspiracy, consisting of seven members, which spread its tentacles in the shape of secret groups all over Russia. A secret code, iron discipline, and the constantly reiterated rumour that Trotsky was planning a rising, bound the conspirators together. Everything was done with the utmost caution, for neither Stalin, Zinoviev, nor Kameniev was really certain that Lenin was at the point of death. At all events the conspirators left themselves a loophole of escape, and they succeeded in making wholesale alterations in the Government service. Mediocrity, in the shape of the genuine, coarse, dull-witted, out-and-out Bolshevik, was quietly brought to the fore; and this type of man looked up to Stalin as his own highest expression, the creature of his own flesh and blood, the practical, coarse, hardened Bolshevik and conspirator. Mean-

while Trotsky's condition grew worse and worse. He spent whole months in bed, unable to play any practical part in politics. At last he consented to listen to his doctor's advice to take a long holiday in the Caucasus, to recuperate and regain his strength. When his train left Moscow the conspirators heaved a sigh of relief!

At the railway station of Tiflis a telegram was handed to him. It contained the brief announcement, "Lenin is dead." He immediately dashed to the telephone and got on to the Kremlin. Stalin was at the other end. "When is the funeral to take place?"

"On Saturday. You can't possibly get back in time for it. So just go off to the Caucasian Riviera. Take care of yourself!"

And Trotsky continued his journey. He did not know that the man at the other end of the line had lied to him. For Lenin's funeral did not take place until Sunday and Trotsky would have had time to get back for it. But he did not come! Hundreds of thousands of workers stood in serried ranks on the Red Square; they were expecting to see Trotsky who had now become the first man in the Union.

But they waited in vain! No explanation was given of his unaccountable absence, but the tale was everywhere circulated that while Russia, bowed down with grief, was bearing Lenin to his last resting place, Trotsky was amusing himself in a luxurious hotel surrounded by palm groves on the shores of the Black Sea. In rough workmen's clothes, their heads bowed, and exhibiting every outward sign of the deepest despair, Stalin, Kameniev, and Zinoviev walked behind Lenin's coffin before the eyes of the vast multitude.

After Lenin's death there was no difficulty in suppressing his political testament. With his half-paralysed hand he had been able a little while before his death to draw a political portrait of Stalin. He acknowledged the latter's strength of will, his determination, and his indomitable strength, but ended up with the uncompromising statement: "Stalin is rude and disloyal and inclined to abuse power."



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THE RED GENERALS
BUDIONNY AND VOROSHILOV

He wrote these lines a few months before he died. Though he did not deny that his old supporter possessed the most valuable Bolshevik qualities, he regarded him as unfitted for the post of General Secretary, for it was a position that "might easily lead to the abuse of power." "Rudeness is included in the Bolshevik list of virtues," says the testament, "but I think that our General Secretary abuses this virtue." Equally serious warnings against other people were also expressed in the testament, and Trotsky's portrait is if possible even more unflattering than Stalin's. But the document was, of course, never made public.

Lenin's death and Trotsky's absence released the conspirators from the last constraints of ordinary caution. Now it was only a matter of levelling the final blow against Trotsky's citadel, against his War Commissariat. In spite of his absence he still had a firm hold on the army, especially the troops in Moscow, and the conspirators were convinced that he could give the order for attack at a moment's notice, in which case he would certainly be master of Russia in a few hours. Why Trotsky never gave this order remains a mystery. He may have hesitated to disturb the sound revolutionary spirit of the country.

But Stalin did not hesitate! General Frunze, a devoted adherent of the Political Bureau, was recalled from the Ukraine and made commandant of the Moscow Defence District, while officers friendly to Trotsky were immediately replaced by men from Ukraine regiments. In a few days Trotsky was hopelessly discredited in army circles. And it was only to make his fall all the more plain that the unofficial Minister of War, Frunze, paid him a visit in Sukhum and personally informed him of the changes that had been made in the officers' corps. Thus Frunze's little military rising passed off quite quietly and without disturbances of any sort. But it was only its success that reassured the conspirators who had been living on tenterhooks for days and weeks, and released them from the fear of being seized by the troops and placed with their backs to the wall. Stalin rewarded Frunze handsomely. He died as Minister of War to the Union.

Meanwhile Trotsky was taking his holiday in the sunshine and invigorating atmosphere of the Black Sea. The fight inside the Party had not yet been made public, and he had no difficulty in returning to Moscow. But, all at once, in response to orders from headquarters, a wonderfully organized press campaign against him was opened in every town and village in Russia, from the capital to the remotest hamlet. He was suddenly accused of every crime under the sun. Old half-forgotten differences with the Party were raked up, his crimes against Bolshevik ideals were revealed and the contrast between the "genuine Bolshevik" Lenin and the old Party guard on the one hand, and the "adventitious Party-man" Trotsky on the other, was emphasized. Thus the attack was made to appear as though it had the authority of dead Lenin who could of course take no part in the controversy.

The charges made against Trotsky were casuistic, and as such interested only the schoolmen of the Party. They turned chiefly on his theory of permanent revolution, his underestimation of the peasant problem, of the old guard of the Party, the Party leaders, and above all the person of Lenin, who henceforward came to be regarded officially as almost a god. The substance of all these charges, however, was: "Comrade Trotsky is a restless spirit, who is always discovering something fresh, and pestering us with his temperament. He is unsympathetic to us!" This point of view met with support in the Party. Evidently people had grown tired of Comrade Trotsky!

During the period when these attacks were being made on him Trotsky was helpless. He was again confined to his bed. Sick and feverish, his hands clutched hold of the various newspapers that were brought to his house every day. But he could not brace himself to make any reply. Every day Stalin from his office levelled the most terrific blows against him. Messages were broadcast to the masses, harsh resolutions were passed. The rank and file of the Party were obviously turning against Trotsky. And when at last he was better, and in his usual clever polemical

style began to round on his enemies, the spirit of the Party was already too hostile to him. Indeed, his polemical outburst actually proved useful to Stalin. "Just look!" he cried. "This conceited Menshevik cannot even endure criticism! He sets to work at once to bring about a split in the Party!"

On November 19, 1924, Stalin appeared with Kameniev at the plenary meeting of the All-Russian Central Committee of Trade Unions and delivered his famous speech against Trotsky. It was brimming over with hatred and denied every one of Trotsky's past services. From first to last, declared Stalin, Trotsky had been the prodigal son of the Party, and it was only owing to its extraordinary forbearance that he had been tolerated for so long. And now he was trying to plunge it into ruin. He summed up by saying that Trotsky had always hated Lenin, that he had slandered him, and had been his enemy. But it was not so much the arguments and the oratorical gifts of the speaker, as the sinister, menacing tone of his speech and the violent gestures that accompanied it, together with the general appearance of this blameless old member of the Party, which made a deep impression on the assembled Communists. And when at the end Stalin revealed the contents of a letter which Trotsky had written to the detested Menshevik Chkheidze, Trotsky was ruined as far as that particular gathering was concerned. This letter contained such sentences as these: "Lenin is a professional exploiter of every backward feature of the Russian Labour Movement."—"With funds obtained from some shady source Lenin bought a journal and deliberately appropriated the name of a well-known newspaper. And as soon as it began to flourish he converted it into a lever for intrigues and unscrupulous sectarianism."—"The whole structure of Leninism is built up on lies and fraud, and its walls are riddled with the poisonous corrosive of his own decay," etc.

This letter had been written on April 1, 1913, in Vienna, and addressed to Chkheidze, a member of the Duma. It had been seized and kept by the police, and Stalin had extracted

it from their archives in 1920. Lenin had apparently known of its existence but had attached no importance to this long forgotten pre-war incident. But published at this juncture, shortly after Lenin's death, the letter did not fail in its effect. It says a good deal for Stalin's farsightedness that, as soon as his Party came into power, he should have taken possession of all the police archives, which furnished him with a chest full of poison for everybody. Unfortunately he destroyed the papers concerning himself, which means that there will always be certain lacunæ in the history of his life. Here too he has imposed his will upon fate. He wishes to remain anonymous and to supply only bare dates concerning his life; if he gives any details he always does so in such a way as to suit his own purposes for the moment.

Trotsky described the publication of this letter as the basest act in the history of the world. But all his passionate speeches and articles defending himself were of no avail. Stalin had prepared the ground well. On January 17, 1925, the plenary meeting of the Central Committee and of the Central Control Commission informed Trotsky that owing to his factiousness and the difficulties it created, he must resign from the post of War Commissar. At the same time he was severely reprimanded and warned that he would be expelled from the Party unless he ceased to criticize its general policy. He was given the insignificant post of head of a Concessions Committee to deal with electrical supplies and scientific and technical matters connected with industry. His political career was at an end!

The victors, Stalin, Kameniev, and Zinoviev, could now share the spoils. In the heat of the conflict with the constant menace that Trotsky might after all head a rising, the question of the distribution of power had been left in abeyance. But it now entered the realm of practical politics. Zinoviev and Kameniev, who had covered Stalin's struggle with their authority as old and intimate friends of Lenin, demanded their share in the redistribution of power. Immediately after Trotsky's fall, how-

ever, it became clear that Stalin was far from being inclined to share his position of power with anyone, least of all Kameniev and Zinoviev. As usual ideological reasons were advanced in this private quarrel, and, as old and experienced exiles, who for years had been Lenin's most intimate associates, the two had not much difficulty in showing that Stalin's attitude was inconsistent with Marxian doctrines and the principle of Internationalism. And herein they found themselves obliged willy-nilly to adopt Trotsky's point of view.

Stalin accepted the challenge. He had just overthrown the giant Trotsky and the fight with the pygmies Kameniev and Zinoviev was mere child's play. He could even afford to assume a constitutional attitude in this struggle, and easily contrived to make all the decisions of the Central Committee turn against Kameniev and Zinoviev. Thus the rank and file of the Party, who were supporters of Stalin the Asiatic, triumphed all along the line, and Kameniev and Zinoviev, who were merely semi-intellectuals, were obliged to retreat empty-handed after their victory, and sought refuge in Trotsky's camp.

And thus the second opposition, with Trotsky, Kameniev, and Zinoviev at its head came into being in 1925. It was with some reluctance that Trotsky entered into alliance with the two traitors, and for a while his followers actually wished him to join Stalin. A well-known Trotskyite summed up the merits of the two alternatives as follows, "Stalin will cheat you and Zinoviev will run away."

And he was right. At the critical moment, at the fifteenth Congress of the Party, Zinoviev literally turned tail.

In his struggle with this second opposition, Stalin was free from all constraints. The good Government machine, full of his picked men, was devoted heart and soul to him. Gradually these officials, at his instigation, demanded, tentatively at first and then more and more vehemently, that steps should be taken against the opposition. The conflict became acute and once more the rumour spread that the Trotskyites were trying to bring

about a split in the Party and were heading for a catastrophe. And from the irresistible, tenacious, and supremely indolent rank and file of the Party came the reply: "Hit back at them! Have done with the opposition who are driving us headlong to ruin!"

Stalin, who was in complete unity with the machinery he controlled, responded to the demand. And suddenly the October revolutionaries were openly persecuted by the bureaucracy and the administration. Trotsky's followers were forbidden to hold meetings, and their speakers were howled down, driven away, and banished. Zinoviev and Kameniev were now hoist with their own petard. As the heads of the Petrograd and Moscow Soviets, they had long been unscrupulously inciting their followers against Trotsky and now that they themselves had gone over to him the bulk of the Party refused to obey them and would no longer follow their lead. Stalin suppressed the opposition with an experienced hand and his severity bore fruit, for on October 16, 1926, Trotsky, Zinoviev, and Kameniev signed a declaration in which they professed their loyalty to the Party, but merely reserved to themselves the right of holding their own private opinions within the united Party. At the same time, as was only to be expected of hardened conspirators, they began to hatch fresh plots.

Life in the Kremlin became more and more intolerable, for mutual hatred and envy were no longer hidden under the cloak of convention. Every day men who were mortal enemies faced each other at the meetings of the Political Bureau and of the Central Committee. With cold-blooded serenity Stalin dictated his orders, and the majority of the Central Committee accepted them unconditionally, partly out of fear of Stalin and partly because they were afraid of Trotsky's conspiracy. Trotsky attended these meetings. With contempt written on every line of his face, he sat in his place and interrupted Stalin's speeches with cries of "Madness!" "Idiot!" "Fool!" Stalin did not move a muscle; such exclamations fell on deaf ears as far as he was concerned. He was

already in power. He still continued to spare the actual leaders of the opposition, but merely as a personal act of grace. Trotsky's behaviour compromised only himself. As for Kameniev and Zinoviev, Stalin no longer paid the slightest attention to them. He knew Lenin's description of them—"treachery is in their very blood." When Molotov, his right-hand man in all theoretical matters connected with his struggle against the opposition, called his attention to the possible menace of a coalition between Zinoviev, Kameniev, and Trotsky, he replied contemptuously: "They will come crawling on their bellies to me!" Apparently he knew the pair well!

The early months of the year 1927, which was the year of the all-important fifteenth Congress, were marked by a new grand rally on the part of the opposition. The Party, the opposition, and the whole of Russia felt that either the machinery of Government would break the back of the stubborn opposition once and for all, or else that the "three Jews" would succeed in again seizing the reins of power. In spite of all Stalin had done, the trio still exercised considerable influence over the workers, and Stalin fully appreciated the danger of this. He therefore tried to conclude peace with Trotsky, offering him material compensations for his loss of political power. Ambassadorships and other high offices were offered to the opposition. But they declined. And thus open war was declared.

Suddenly, in the middle of discussions about revolution *in perpetuo*, Stalin was faced with the complete collapse of his policy in China. Chiang Kai-Shek utterly routed the Communist Party in China which was in league with Stalin. This was a blow for Stalin, for he had supported the Chinese generals. The younger members of the Party began to waver, and there were daily defections to the opposition. In the homes of the workers, in the factories and workshops, semi-official meetings of the opposition were held, at which Trotsky always made himself conspicuous. His influence was once more in the ascendant. The famous mass demonstration in Petrograd on November 7th al-

most ended in an open fight, and the workers cheered the leaders of the opposition. Stalin then resolved to have recourse to police measures.

On the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution the opposition who had fought with such distinction in it found themselves assailed on all sides by the police. Their banners were torn to shreds, and their speakers publicly flogged before the eyes of the workers. Drunken men in the crowd shook their fists at Trotsky and Zinoviev, and Stalin was so kind as to place them both under the protection of the G.P.U. troops. This tenth anniversary of the October struggle was the decisive day for Trotsky when it became plain to all that he was really trying to engineer a rising. Nevertheless behind Stalin's broad back the majority of the party could still feel safe. Even when shouts of "Long live Trotsky," raised by bands of workers, echoed through the Kremlin making Stalin's Communists turn pale, he himself retained his customary composure, and during the most critical moments remained, at least outwardly, calm and serene. "Our Party is suffering from an attack of measles!" he declared, and this description of the opposition was circulated all over Russia and secured him fresh adherents.

After the failure of the demonstrations on October 10th, the opposition began to collapse. Stalin possessed a quality lacking in his adversaries, including Trotsky—a strong unbending will. Ideological criticism left him cold, but when his critics began to appeal to the working masses, he had recourse to the troops of the G.P.U. His power had already become the power of a police-ordered state. He showed the young Trotsky idealists no mercy, and at the same time drew an iron ring ever more closely about the leaders. The split in the Party had become patent to all.

Such was the state of affairs when preparations began to be made for the fifteenth Party Congress, at which Stalin levelled his last political blow against Trotsky. The Congress accomplished in the realm of politics what had already been begun by

the police, and the changes that had occurred during the last few years were made abundantly clear. The majority of the Party clung tenaciously to Stalin, recognizing in him the highest expression of their being, and unconditionally supporting his dictatorship which was also their own. The era of intellectual leaders, who were spiritually outside the Party, was over. At the fifteenth Congress Stalin delivered a great political speech. After the events of the last few months, he had little difficulty in showing that the opposition had thrown Party discipline to the winds, that they had cut themselves off from the majority, and had proved deficient in all the Bolshevik virtues. He accused them of factious demagogic agitation, conspiracies against the Central Committee, and open insurrection. As he stood on the platform he was cheered and applauded by the crowd. His tone was grave and he accompanied his words with resolute gestures, speaking in a low voice with a strong Georgian accent, and using coarse and vulgar expressions. But his speech was full of power. It meant the end of Trotsky, Kameniev, and Zinoviev!

Incidentally, Zinoviev fulfilled the prophecies Trotsky and Stalin had made about him, for he fled, and crawled back on his belly to Stalin. At the eleventh hour he broke away from Trotsky, repented of his sins, and implored the Congress to forgive him. The Congress passed a resolution expelling the whole of the opposition from the Party, and the ultimate fate of the leaders was left to the G.P.U. to settle.

Stalin was now definitely triumphant, and at the end of the Congress, as a symbol of his power, he was handed a steel broom "with which to sweep the Party clean of filth." At last he was dictator!

Thus ended Stalin's great fight for power, which had started as early as the days of the civil war and had become definitely outlined when he was appointed Gensec. It ended in 1927 with Trotsky's expulsion from the Party. Trotsky was banished without giving rise to any disturbance. The other leaders of the opposition, all the intellectuals of the Party, were either sent to

Siberia or incarcerated in the dungeons of some jail in central Russia, where they either died or capitulated to Stalin and his majority.

Stalin attained to power as the representative of the Asiatic majority in the Party, whom the course of events, the decline of revolutionary enthusiasm, and the very essence of Bolshevism were bound to lead to victory, though naturally the commanding and titanic personality of Stalin also played its part in determining the issue. Stalin had created the rank and file of the Party, but he had also created his own majority in it. Well aware of what he was doing, he strode towards his goal, towards dictatorship, which he regarded as the only means of saving the Revolution, or rather of saving his despotic Asiatic imperialism which in all honesty he is firmly convinced is identical with the Revolution.

He began his work of saving the Revolution in Lenin's lifetime by creating a majority for himself in the Party. Convinced as he was that he alone could give the right direction to the Revolution, he held all means to be justifiable. The work he did inside the Party with the object of reorganizing it and of which very little is known even today, and the conversion of the Party into an exclusive caste disciplined on military lines, was an important preliminary step to victory. This work inside the Party, this deliberate bureaucratic conspiracy, which was carried on concurrently with the attack on Trotsky, will form the subject of the next chapter.

STALIN'S REORGANIZATION OF THE PARTY

LENIN'S DAYS WERE DRAWING TO A CLOSE. EVERYBODY WAS AWARE of it, including Lenin himself. It was only with difficulty that he was able to leave his sick-bed in Gorki in order to take up his everyday work. The routine business, and the bureaucratic, political, and technical work of the Party had to be disposed of by its two principal departments, the Political Bureau and the General Secretariat, of both of which Stalin was the head. He had secured these two posts, membership of the Political Bureau and the office of General Secretary, without much difficulty, for the leading members of the Party regarded it as only right and proper that Stalin, who was obviously unsuited for public life, should occupy a position of honour within the Party machine where he would be able, after long years of revolutionary activity, to devote himself to the quieter work of the Party and of politics at home.

The new rulers seemed to have forgotten the fact that in the Soviet State the power emanated from the Party. While Lenin was alive he had of course done everything himself with the help of his staff of faithful assistants, who exercised absolute power over both the Party and the whole of Russia. And Stalin was regarded merely as the executive officer who carried out the decisions of the Central Committee. Nobody ever dreamt that he was aiming at independent action within the Party. Yet such was the case!

Shortly before the twelfth Party Congress, in 1922, after Lenin had had his first stroke, Stalin was sitting in his little

office in the Kremlin, with a mass of papers heaped up in front of him. The routine work of the General Secretary's office was enormous. Every day Stalin ran through the reports from the Party centres which poured on to his table from every part of the country, and formed his conclusions, after which he drove to attend various meetings and conferences. But on this occasion he did not read any of the reports. At the side of his table, which was littered with papers, lay a round *churek* (an unsalted Caucasian roll), and from time to time with his coarse, unwashed hands he would break off a piece of it. As he munched the bread he thought over the situation. The state of the Party was somewhat depressing. The members were behaving like a horde of undisciplined exiles. After the iron years of militant Communism there were signs of opposition, people held divergent views and expressed their own opinion. This annoyed Stalin. What good order had once prevailed in the Party! True, this had been in the early days when its numbers had not swelled to millions!

Stalin looked down into the courtyard. A young agent of the Cheka, with two revolvers in his belt, was just crossing it. Stalin shook his head. The Cheka was the best organized department in the Party. It forced all Russia to obey. But it had no say in Party problems. Misdemeanours, crimes, and breaches of discipline on the part of Communists were under the jurisdiction of the C.C.C., the Central Control Commission. Stalin frowned. He remembered the eleventh Party Congress, when the delegates had clamoured vociferously for the dissolution of the C.C.C., the Party's political police. Stalin, who had just been elected General Secretary, had had to put the matter to the vote. And when he laid the result before Lenin he had seen the Master's face darken. The majority of votes had been in favour of the abolition of the Party police. But this did not please Lenin. It was he himself who in 1920 had created the C.C.C. and given it certain somewhat vague duties and privileges. At first no one had paid any attention to the new body and it had eaten its

head off with nothing to do, with no office and no officials. It was only later on that Lenin began gradually to extend its privileges. At the eleventh Party Congress, however, his idea of forming a Party police was very far from having been achieved. Nevertheless members of the Party, simple-minded though they were, perceived the danger, and the majority were in favour of abolishing the Commission, Stalin called to mind the frown with which Lenin had glanced at the result of the voting. He also remembered how he himself on that rainy day had at a surreptitious sign from Lenin saved the C.C.C. "Comrades," he said, rising to his feet to announce the outcome of the ballot, "the result of the voting is an overwhelming majority in favour of the maintenance of the Central Control Commission." The lie succeeded and Stalin has never ceased to congratulate himself upon it.

The twelfth Party Congress was approaching, and the C.C.C. had not yet become all it should be. But things were going to change now! Stalin pushed the churek to one side and began to draft his scheme on a scrap of paper. He worked for hours, until his private secretary entered the room to announce the arrival of Comrade Ordjonikidze. Stalin waved his hand. "At last! Just show him in!" The door opened and on the threshold, clad in a grey military tunic, stood his beloved old friend, comrade-in-arms, and fellow-countryman, the erstwhile Activist Sergo Ordjonikidze, smiling good-naturedly. He was the man who, long ago in the prison of Bailov, had been flogged raw by the Social-Revolutionaries for Stalin's sake.

"Sit thee down, Sergo!" said Stalin with a kindly smile, for he was genuinely fond of old Sergo. "How many men are there in the C.C.C.?" he asked craftily, as soon as Sergo had also broken off a piece of the Caucasian churek. "Seven," replied Sergo in surprise. Stalin smiled again. "Things will have to be different," he said. And picking up the piece of paper on which he had been scribbling he read aloud in Georgian—thank God one could speak Georgian with Sergo!—the details of the plan for the crea-

tion of the Party police. He had made up his mind to have it accepted by the twelfth Congress of the Party which was to meet in Lenin's absence.

And he succeeded! Thus in 1923 he triumphantly laid the foundation stone of the new constitution of the Party, the Central Control Commission, with the help of which he holds every member of the Party in an iron grip.

After the Congress the C.C.C. attained to a position of extraordinary power. Its original task, which was to wage war on the criminal elements in the Party, was soon extended to waging war on any kind of opposition and maintaining the unity of the Party. Its members rose from 7 in 1922, to 50 in 1923, then to 151 in 1924, to 163 in 1925, and 195 in 1927. Today it consists of 187 members. Apparently Stalin was unable to find any more men on whom he could absolutely rely. At the same time, in accordance with his scheme, the rights of the C.C.C. were extended at the twelfth Congress and it was given a representative in every town and every organization of the Party. Even the Cheka and the Army are controlled, as far as the business of Party politics is concerned, by the C.C.C. Sergo Ordjonikidze who together with Stalin had drawn up the original draft of the scheme became President of the Commission. The members of the C.C.C. who are carefully picked men are not chosen from among prominent officials of the Party. They are either ordinary workmen, or simple and experienced old conspirators who did not rise to eminence during the course of the Revolution and from whom no sort of opposition is to be feared. They are the men who in cold blood expelled Trotsky and his like from the Party and, according to Lenin's wife, would certainly not have hesitated to have thrown even Lenin into prison.

They are not allowed to be elected to posts connected with Party organizations, that is to say, they are not allowed to be members of congresses and conferences, but are bound to attend every meeting of the Party as official observers. The Central Commission is controlled by the so-called plenary meeting which

is convened every four months, and acts as a sort of Communist court to judge all State and Party questions. In the case of charges against private individuals it expels the guilty person from the Party, and hands him over to be dealt with by the Central Committee, that is to say, the Political Bureau, of which Stalin is the embodiment. During the four-month intervals between these meetings, the business of the C.C.C. is conducted by a committee of twenty-five members, who, in conjunction with the representatives of the Ministries, prepare all the important measures to be passed by the authorities, and then lay them before the Political Bureau. The C.C.C. also has its own permanent unofficial representatives in all the Government bodies, Commissariats, etc. From time to time the members are rewarded for their services by being raised to prominent positions of authority.

With the help of this Party police, whose representatives are distributed all over Russia, Stalin succeeds in keeping watch over every member of the Party. Nothing can be said, done, or projected without his knowledge. This Party guard, for such it really is, is hardly known by the public, and never comes out into the open. But it constitutes an essential factor in the general constitution of the Party, which culminates in the Party Parliament created by Stalin. This Parliament, which is the highest authority in Stalin's Party, consists of the Central Committee and the C.C.C. sitting together in plenary session. Now and again representatives of other influential organizations are invited to attend certain meetings of this secret Parliament. It has three hundred and fifty to five hundred members, who constitute the real governing body of Stalin's State, and are the pillars of his regime.

The political machinery of Russia may be described as follows. The country is ruled by the Communist Party, while the Cheka keeps peace and order. The Party is ruled by the Central Committee, while the C.C.C. keeps peace and order within the Party. The original division of power between the Soviets and

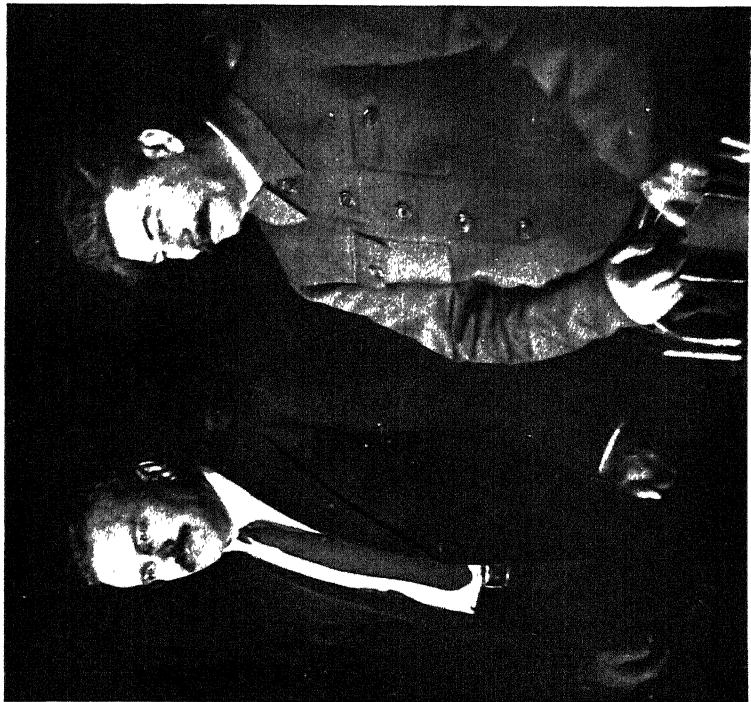
the various departments of the Party was abolished by Stalin in favour of the Party. The C.C. and the C.C.C. constitute the permanent Parliament, while the C.C.C. in particular consists of men in whom Stalin can place absolute reliance. They are feared and hated by the rank and file of the Party, but being convinced that they have a share in the government of the country they are blindly devoted to Stalin. Each member is given his own particular district in the country, in which he has long been the most influential man, and is responsible to the Political Bureau, that is to say Stalin, for this area.

The Party machine has thus developed into a police organization, and as, moreover, Stalin has cleverly contrived to make all the members of his Control Commission hated by the ordinary members of the Party, he can rely on their eternal fidelity. The complicated, unwritten constitution of the Party, however, does not end here. It is easier for Stalin to rule Russia than to rule the Communist Party, and therefore the organization just described is repeated in miniature not only in every division of the Party, but also in every one of the Soviet republics down to the most insignificant, in all of which the members sit only on sufferance from Stalin. Everywhere, in addition to the official authorities of the Party, Stalin's unofficial agent is to be found, a man who is bound to him for better for worse, and who nips in the bud every movement that might prove hostile to Stalin. The whole of this complex system of control, together with the C.C.C. and the C.C. and similar smaller organizations, constitutes Stalin's famous Government machine, in the working of which his consummate mastery is revealed.

How did Stalin discover his machine? This question, which is so often asked, is really due to a misapprehension. Stalin did not discover his machine, it discovered him as being the only leader, except Lenin, who understood it and was by nature one with it. For years Stalin had led the subterranean life of a Russian conspirator, which had enabled him to explore the Party organization to the full. He had travelled through the whole of



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MOLOTOV AND STALIN

Russia and had been obliged to keep his identity carefully concealed from all who were not Communists. But his relations with the few Communists distributed over the country were all the closer. Krassin, too, was an old conspirator, but he always remained a "gentleman," a rich, respectable man. Stalin, on the other hand, who was neither rich nor respectable, neither learned nor educated, was by nature far better suited than any one else to the rude, brutal, and primitive mentality of a simple Russian Bolshevik.

When Stalin rose to be head of the Party machine, but was still just an ordinary Government official, those members of the Party who resembled him immediately began to gather round him. They were men who had not yet received what they had hoped to gain by the Revolution, or having received it feared to lose it. The following example is an illustration. An illiterate workman and Communist of the older generation who had really not done very much for the Revolution, but who had an unblemished Party record, was given a small administrative post in which from pure ignorance he was guilty of the most absurd behaviour. For example, he calmly gave permission for a donkey to be admitted into the Porters' Trade Union, and suggested as a suitable subject for debate the question whether the natives of Siberia, in accordance with ancient custom, should be allowed to strangle with their own hands relatives who had grown too old to work, or whether this duty should be relegated to the local police, and accused his opponents of ulterior motives. The venerable Communist was spitefully held up to ridicule by his more intelligent fellow-members and some of his most absurd performances were pilloried in the *Pravda*. Deeply offended, the poor fellow proceeded to run from one authority to the other, demanding justice, but he was everywhere laughed at and turned away. At last the authorities very naturally wished to deprive him of his post. But the stubborn old Communist would not rest, and continued to carry his case before an ever higher magnate until at last he reached Stalin. He showed him the last

number of the *Pravda* in which his administrative measures were once more held up to ridicule, and described his revolutionary career which had reached its zenith when he had distributed Bolshevik literature in his factory. Stalin asked him the name of the factory, and laughed with delight when he heard the reply. It turned out that it was he himself who had delivered the leaflets intended for distribution, and on one rainy night had handed the parcel containing them to one of the workers. Thus the old man and Stalin had an adventure in common. Stalin immediately picked up his telephone receiver, called up the editorial offices, and shouted a whole string of the choicest abuse, in which he was a specialist, into the editor's ear. The old worker was overjoyed by this flood of curses taken from the vocabulary of the lowest bandits. Since that day no one has dared to attack the old fellow.

It was chiefly men of this type who were drafted to the C.C.C. and similar offices, and, in their abysmal ignorance, they constituted Stalin's most reliable officials. But it is most important to bear in mind that the scene described above was not the result of a pose or of deliberate humbug, but was Stalin's natural response to the old man's story. He was honestly convinced that the rash editor richly deserved the cart-load of abuse that had been hurled at him. In this way Stalin easily secures the allegiance of the mass of old and as a rule somewhat thick-skulled Russian Bolsheviks. The Bolsheviks of 1905, who have never played a leading part, and whose work in the factories, Party groups, and elsewhere made them acquainted with the Georgian Activist who was never an émigré, are by their very nature wholeheartedly devoted to him. The fact that, in spite of this, they are not given official Government posts, such, for instance, as those of People's Commissars, is mainly to be ascribed to their impenetrable ignorance; and they are best fitted for service in the all-powerful Party police, in the C.C.C., where they suppress every trace of intellect and independence.

But this old guard is dying out, and the number of those who,

like Stalin, are masters of the old Russian vocabulary of abuse and curses is becoming sorely depleted. Even their importance is gradually diminishing, for eventually their ignorance makes them useless for Stalin's purposes. During the twelve years of the Revolution a new generation of Communists has come into being. Schooled in the fire of the civil war, they are now preparing to take over the control of the State. Stalin is desperately anxious to win the confidence of the Comsomol, the League of Communist Youth. He is the head of several Communist secondary schools, and shows the young Communists every sign of favour. Now and again he picks out from the rising generation some particularly suitable youth whom he proceeds to play off in a masterly manner against the old Party idols. But for one young Communist who has climbed to the top he secures the allegiance of thousands of others.*

In practice to be master of the Communist Party is now synonymous with being master of Russia. In spite of Trotskyism, in spite of the still dangerous Right opposition, and the notorious defection of the lower middle classes, Stalin still remains the sovereign ruler of the Party. As chief of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party, he is able, if he wishes, to change the occupant of any Government post. The official Minister of the Union may, as a member of the Party, be removed from his position at a moment's notice by the Political Bureau of the Party, and given some such post, for instance, as superintendent of the sheep-rearing industry in the Siberian steppes. By the decision of the C.C.C. such a Minister, general, or ambassador may be expelled from the Party, which means that his political existence is at an end. As head of the Political Bureau, though it performs no state function, and is merely an authority within the Party, Stalin is in a position to banish even the official President of the Union from Russia. At the time when the Right opposition was

* Among these men of the younger generation, we may mention Andreyev, who has just risen to the top, and Stalin's temporary favourite, Syrtsov, who suddenly fell from grace only a short while ago.

becoming troublesome, the idea of banishing Rykov and Kalinin was seriously discussed, and it was not carried out only because no country could be found which would give them both hospitality. In Russia all this is taken as a matter of course. But it would be impossible to imagine such a state of affairs in Germany. What would people say, for instance, if the Chief Commissioner of Police in Berlin were to expel the Chancellor or the President from the country!

From his quiet little room in the Kremlin, Stalin rules the Party. Even yet he occupies no Government post in which the power is officially vested,* but owing to the peculiar constitution of the Party, all the leading ambassadors and generals of the Union are mere puppets in his hands, content though he is with the modest and insignificant position of a Party Secretary. His power over the Party is twofold. As General Secretary and head of the Political Bureau, he determines the policy of every Department of State. Every minister is an official of the Political Bureau and must carry out its decisions unquestioningly. The Political Bureau, which consists of carefully chosen members of the Central Committee, issues orders over the head of the minister to ambassadors and administrative departments, orders of which the minister frequently hears only some time later. The Political Bureau, however, is a sort of collective hydra, and its business is conducted by the General Secretariat, which thus holds all the power in its hands. The chief General Secretary is Stalin, the second Molotov, and the third Kaganovich. In this way Stalin and his two associates constitute the apex of the political pyramid.

Thus one of Stalin's channels of power leads through the General Secretariat of the Political Bureau. The second leads through the head of the Party police, Ordjonikidze, who is

*It was only at the end of 1930 that he suddenly became a member of the "S.T.O." (The Defence of the Realm Board) of which Molotov is President. Molotov was given this post after the great reform of the Army, when Stalin joined the Board as an ordinary member.

blindly devoted to him. With Ordjonikidze's help all members of the Party who do not unquestioningly obey the orders of the General Secretariat receive disciplinary punishment. From time to time Ordjonikidze carries out his famous "purging of the Party" which makes even the older executioners of the Cheka shake in their shoes. Only a little while ago Blumkin, the famous executioner and Cheka official, who murdered Count Mirbach, was expelled from the Party by Ordjonikidze, whereupon his own colleagues in the Cheka took him into custody and shot him. The reason for such acts is always the same. Blumkin had roused the General Secretary's suspicions. This periodical purging of the Party is the second source of Stalin's power.

In the old Kremlin of Moscow, in the little room from which the pious Tsars and their retainers once made Moscow the centre of the Empire and on whose walls the ghosts of strangled women and stabbed children have left their mark, by a low, old-fashioned window from which the false Demetrius once gazed out on his city, is a rough, unpolished table covered with papers and documents. At it sits a man already well advanced in middle age, with a drooping black moustache and sternly pursed lips. He is General Secretary Stalin, sole ruler of a chaotic mass of people. Every morning the faithful Tovstukha shows the members of the General Secretariat into his room. The conference opens and at that little table the fate of Russia, world politics, the question of propaganda abroad, and many other problems are discussed. Secretary Tovstukha writes down the brief orders. Stalin makes notes. He never smiles at meetings of the General Secretariat, he merely issues his commands. With head slightly bowed, he listens to Kaganovich's and Molotov's reports, and after an interval of silence gives the authentic Marxian solution of the questions raised, which has then to be accepted by the whole of Russia.

Later in the day when the Comrades have gone and other visitors have been interviewed, his faithful old friend Sergo Ordjonikidze comes in. Stalin then produces a Caucasian

churek, inquires after Sergo's Eskimo wife, and hands him the long list of newly discovered opponents, dangerous people, stray sheep, and so on. Sergo puts the list in his pocket and the unity of the Party is entrusted to his safe-keeping. A little while ago Ordjonikidze, who was tired of police work and believed the situation to be now secure, was made chief of the Supreme Economic Council, one of the most important posts in Russia, and the young Communist Andreyev stepped into his place.

Thus does Stalin keep his hold over the Party. His hold over Russia and the men about him is secured by different means.

STALINISM

SINCE 1924 THE NAME OF STALIN HAS GRADUALLY BECOME MORE and more prominent in the political articles of all European and American newspapers. His portrait appears in the illustrated magazines, and hangs on the walls of all the Communist meeting-rooms, institutions, and homes in the world. Whenever Russia, revolution, or conspiracy is discussed his name is always mentioned first. His enemies have been annihilated, he is the undisputed despot of Russia, and the head of International Communism, the sole heir of Marx and Lenin. With a firm grip his hands clasp the steel broom once given him by the Petrograd workers which represents a power whereof no Tsar or Cæsar ever dreamed. But he himself, the possessor of this power, remains as he has always been, "a dark horse." His old habits as a conspirator make him shun publicity, he occupies no Government post, but only holds three offices which make but little appeal to the public imagination. He is the first General Secretary of the Russian Communist Party, he is a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party, and a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. He holds no post in the Soviet Government except as a member of the Executive Committee. His power rests on the Party bureaucracy, whence it spreads over Russia. The Party itself, as an organization, might be compared to a monastic order occupying all the temporal positions in the country; while the country itself, made up as it is of the innumerable republics of the Union, constitutes a whole only to the extent that its existence is entirely controlled

by the supreme authority of the Party. In the tiniest village, in the smallest settlement of the Union, the lowest units of the order are to be found, the Communist "cells," or groups, which supervise the whole of the political, cultural, and economic life of the village, settlement, district, or Government area, and are expected to oppose any deviation from the general line of policy. The cell is organized on military lines, and is supported by organizations of the local youth, who are also called upon to discharge police duties. They form themselves into brigades which control the work in the factories, and supervise the Government offices; they are allowed to examine into the private life of every citizen and inform the superior police authority of any irregularity they may discover. Again, inside every cell there are Party spies, that is to say, men who control the life of the cell and report to a higher department any abuses that may occur.

Admittance into the Party is now made extremely difficult. Only those who have gone through the long schooling of the Communist youth organizations and have absorbed the political spirit of the Party discipline, find it comparatively easy to be promoted Communists.

The politico-state administration, the famous G.P.U., which also has absolute power of life and death over all who are not Communists, keeps watch over the life, conduct, thoughts, and dreams of the simple citizen of the Union. All citizens are under an obligation to denounce each other to the G.P.U. and failure to do so is enough to make them suspect. The Government posts are filled exclusively by members of the various cells, and the Government officials are entirely controlled by the instructions issued by the Party. This system is not restricted by geographical or national boundaries. Theoretically it is valid all over the world, and it is hoped that one day it will actually be universal. For the Union is officially a union of national Soviet Republics, which can easily open its arms to include new members. Just as the macrocosm is reflected in the microcosm, so the constitution of the whole Union is reflected in the constitution of the small-

est Soviet Republic, which like the State itself has its Central Committee, its cells, its youth organizations and its Party machinery for the supervision of the Government servants. As State organizations, these Republics are independent, but the Communist Party, which holds the reins of power in each separate Republic, is, from the standpoint of organization, practice, and theory, subject to the Central Communist authority, which through the Party thus indirectly controls all the Soviet republics.

The lowest Government body is the Soviet, which is elected by the free vote of all who enjoy suffrage rights. But as the candidates for the Soviets are nominated exclusively by the Communist Party, such elections are merely a confirmation of the lists drawn up by the Party. There is nothing to prevent the system of Communist dictatorship and Soviet power being extended throughout the world, without necessarily involving any change or modification in its inner structure. It is really the system of the old rulers of the steppes, the Mongolian Khans, who mastered the world and made the laws of their dictatorship valid for whole continents. The steppes over which these old Khans ruled are the very steppes which are today the basis of the Soviet system. Indeed the whole Mongolian system of government, which should not by any means be condemned too cavalierly, has much in common with Soviet rule. The Soviet power today feels it has a mission to make the whole world happy with its system, just as did the ancient Empire of Jenghiz-Khan with its Jassaks.

This terrible system, this supreme conception of a despotic police state resting on itself, was in all its diabolical consistency and rigid logicality created behind Stalin's low Caucasian brow. He was its founder, and therefore ranks as the highest authority on the subject of how to make mankind happy by compulsion. He honestly regards himself as a scholar who has built his power on the fundamental principles of exact science. Nowadays, he attends meetings of the greatest experts and specialists in Russia,

and delivers long speeches to them, plentifully interlarded with coarse expressions and quotations from Marx. "I am rough and honest," he said at one of these gatherings, and the highest representatives of science crown his oratorical efforts and rise to their feet to declare that "there is no more exact science than Stalinism."

Stalin's figure is now gradually eclipsing those of Lenin and Marx, whose mantle is believed to have fallen on his shoulders. And even if his books, articles, and speeches are composed by others, it is he who supplies the basis of the argument and the line to be followed. He is the loudspeaker broadcasting the voice of consummate wisdom to the remotest corner of the land. Stalinism is the third, supreme, and final stage of human development, the two stages which preceded it being Marxism and Leninism.

Any higher stage of development is unattainable on earth. The gradual eclipse of Lenin was soon followed by his canonization. Pilgrims in Russia now flock to his tomb as they would to the tomb of a god. The spirits of the opposition are exorcized in his name, and the candle which the Russian peasant lights on May 1st is dedicated to him. One of the exiled writers sarcastically remarked, "Lenin is Lenin, and Stalin is his prophet," and the observation contains a certain bitter truth. Stalin, like Mohammed, has latent within him a stupendous need of expansion. His plain, straightforward aim is the aim of Jenghis-Khan of old. He wishes to conquer the world and force mankind to be happy. And he is convinced that he will succeed!

An old Arab legend contains the following passage: "For many a long year a certain Vizier had served his Sultan well and faithfully, and the Sultan resolved in return to make him happy. So calling him to him, he said: 'I wish to make thee happy, and to this end I give thee my own daughter to wed.' But the Vizier threw himself at the Sultan's feet and cried, 'I am old and married. Forgive me, I pray thee, but I cannot wed thy daughter!' Then the Sultan grew angry and said, 'I resolved to make thee

happy and I shall do so.' And to make him happy he sent him to prison."

This exactly describes Stalin. He had made up his mind to make mankind happy and in order to carry out his resolve, he has turned the world, as far as his power reaches, into a prison. Prison as the first step to happiness is the meaning of "Stalinism." It is necessary for him to have mankind wholly in his grasp, either by means of his police force or the Soviet system, in order to direct every detail of their lives. That is why his State is above all a police state. But he contrived to inspire this highest expression of the police state that has ever existed in history with the prosaic passion of Communism. The "Nep" is now abolished, but although not so long ago he was sending people to prison for conducting propaganda in favour of it, he is now, in a peaceful manner it is true, repeating the experiment of militant Communism on a gigantic scale.

A peculiar gift of Stalin's, which bears testimony to his political elasticity and mastery, is that of knowing how to rid himself of his enemies in the most brutal fashion and then in due course including in his own political system the fundamental principles for which he fought them. This was the case with Trotsky, whom he killed politically, but whose political theories, in so far as he regarded them as useful, he accepted within a short space of time, and by so doing became reconciled with many moderate Trotskyites. And this is also constantly happening in the case of the Right Opposition who are able to establish their fundamental principles only through the banishment and imprisonment of their leaders. Stalin is above all a political realist, who fearlessly faces facts and necessary truths and is always ready to relinquish half his fundamental principles in order to preserve the rest.

Another of his time-honoured gifts is his capacity for playing off his opponents against each other, which he has done with the greatest success from his earliest youth. He probably learnt the elements of the art as a ragamuffin in Tiflis and his hand has not yet lost its cunning. Whenever a powerful opposition movement

springs up in the ranks of the Party, he contrives in a very short space of time skilfully to egg on his opponents who, of course, loathe each other although they have united to oppose him, so that they merely fight each other and delight in denouncing one another to the common enemy. By such means he does not find it difficult to keep in power. In his struggle with the opposition, Stalin sometimes exercises clemency, particularly in the case of the old Communists, as it is against his principles ever to have one of the latter shot. For him Communists fall into two groups —those who call him Koba, and those to whom he is Joseph Stalin. The former he generally spares, even when they publicly oppose him. But those who contrive merely to make themselves popular in the Party, he slowly and ruthlessly exterminates.

Stalinism, Stalin's state policy, is at the present moment divided into three parts—Socialism in *one* country, the Five Year Plan, and the collectivization of the peasantry. His famous theory of Socialism in *one* country is the natural consequence of the temporary failure of the World Revolution and the post-revolutionary rise of Nationalism in Russia. The original conception of Communism rested on the conviction that the ideal of Socialism could be consummated only when the countries with large industrial proletariats participated in the Revolution. As an agricultural country, Russia was expected to form merely a spring-board to World Socialism. But post-revolutionary history showed that for the time being Capitalism still stood on solid foundations, and thus the original theory had to be revised.

Stalin succeeded in making this revision. Russia is for him a closed world which in all its constituent parts reflects the conditions in the rest of the world. The proportions are identical, though everything is on a smaller scale, and the theory which was originally to be applied to the world at large therefore retains its validity for the closed world of Russia. For—and herein lies the justification of the theory—Russia possesses an industrial proletariat which in certain districts is very numerous and which according to the theory of Stalinism represents “Western

Europe." Side by side with this there exists a vast agrarian population. Now, even if the World Revolution had taken place, a by no means inconsiderable portion of the Communist world would have been agrarian. And as the law of the communistic cell is the same for a village as for the whole world, so the theory of Socialism triumphant may be applied throughout the globe and also to a more limited and enclosed economic area. In the present instance Russia is the enclosed world in which the theory of Socialism has to be justified. She possesses everything necessary for an independent development—raw materials, agricultural land, sources of energy, and means of production. Theoretically, therefore, she is not dependent on the rest of the world, but can supply all her own needs from resources within her own frontiers. The rank and file of the Party supplement this doctrine by a spirit of Nationalism, and the transition from pure Socialism to unadulterated Nationalism is taking place imperceptibly and without friction, inspired precisely by the theory of Socialism in *one* country. For this country is Russia, and only in Russia is Socialism in *one* country possible! Only Russia can realize this great idea! This belief naturally leads, in the realm of the spirit, to inordinate Asiatic pride and to a wild contempt for those wretched peoples who, owing to economic reasons alone, are dependent on other countries, and cannot therefore build up a Socialist State on their own resources.

Nevertheless at the moment Russia is only theoretically a country capable of building a Chinese wall between herself and the rest of the world. Practically she is still dependent on European industry. In order to exclude Europe and bring about the practical establishment of Socialism in *one* country, a socialistic reconstruction of the State is necessary which will make Europe superfluous. It was considerations of this kind and the desire to make Russia economically independent and thus provide the spirit of Nationalism with every reason for self-glorification, that gave rise to the famous Five Year Plan, which is a scheme for industrializing Russia by force. The Five Year Plan is the great-

est stroke of genius that has ever emanated from the brain of a bureaucrat in a police-ruled state. In the grandeur of its scope and the high-handed manner of its execution, it is profoundly Asiatic, stupendous in its ingenious primitiveness and entirely in keeping with the nature of the new generation of rulers.

The Five Year Plan can be explained to the simplest Russian peasant in a few minutes. In order to establish Socialism, which is Paradise, in *one* country, money is required. But money is lacking, consequently it must be procured! How? By selling everything that can be sold—bread, cattle, wood, oil, women's hair, paving stones, scrap iron, museum pictures, precious stones, and the like. The price obtained is immaterial; the main consideration is to secure ready money for building factories. Everything else is beside the point. Stalin is sacrificing everything to this fanatical aim. Convicts are forced to work; workmen are bound to their workshops for the period of the Five Year Plan; the peasants have to hand over the last grain of corn; the whole of Russia must be content to starve, so that everything the land produces may be dumped on the markets of the world at half price. "Money! Money!" is Stalin's reiterated cry, and he dispatches punitive expeditions against the peasants who do not wish to die of hunger. He has introduced bread cards and divided the population afresh according to the work they do. Some must starve a little, some must be half-starved, and a certain number must actually die of hunger! Nobody is allowed to eat his fill in Russia. Only foreign capitalists may do so, for they supply the money by means of which Stalin will eventually shut Russia off from the rest of the world, until the World Revolution takes place.

But to shut Russia off is not enough! The Five Year Plan aims at smothering the world under an avalanche of Russian goods, undermining the export trade of Europe and America, and thus destroying the capitalists who are so light-heartedly providing the money for the execution of the Plan. Whether it is capable of practical realization, or is the idea of a lunatic, cannot

be discussed here. The fact remains that even if it is only partially realized, Russia will become a formidable industrial country. And the great Powers are helping Stalin in his task by providing engineers, technical experts, and skilled workmen. For the time being Stalin is deliberately reviving the worst times of militant Communism. Terror, the enslavement of the population, and starvation are the present consequences of the Plan.

Russia is on the verge of collapse. But in the Kremlin, surrounded by his few faithful associates, sits the colossus Stalin, dictating his orders, raising factories on wild wastes, with swift strokes annihilating the opponents who are constantly springing up on every side, and lashing his fellow-countrymen on towards the happiness that lies on the distant horizon. This Asiatic let loose, this unfettered Bolshevik, who is prepared to take the whole weight of his nation's starvation and misery and the entire responsibility on to his own shoulders, and expects as a result eventually to have the whole of mankind in his grasp, is inspired by a grandiose vision which he keeps steadily before his eyes. As long as he lives he will never abandon the hope of realizing it.

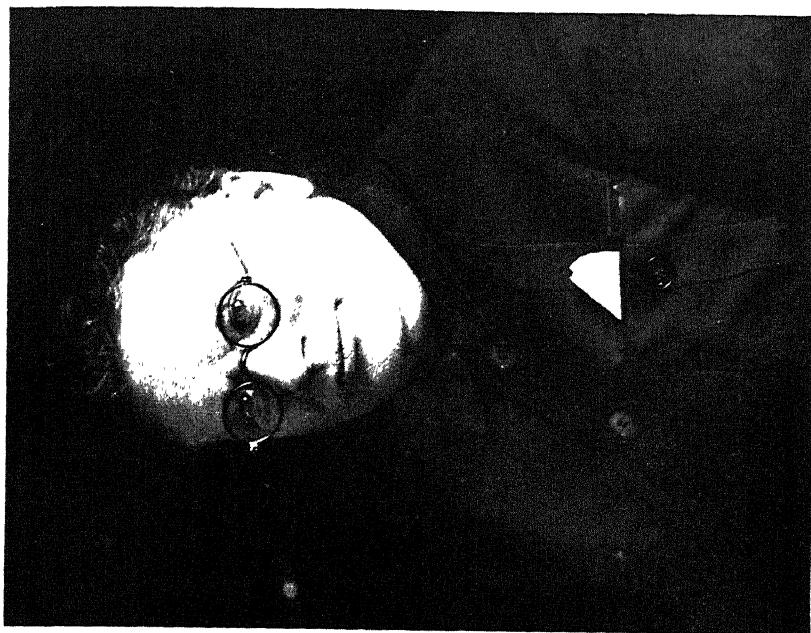
Stalin, with his sombre passion, has succeeded in inspiring his fellow-men with his own fanatical zeal. By the most subtle and unscrupulous advertising propaganda of all kinds, he has won the enthusiasm of at least a portion of Russia for his constructive policy. Every day on a bulletin-board on the Red Square in Moscow he shows the progress made by the Five Year Plan during the past week. The board is covered with figures, names of factories, and descriptions of products. After each item stands the rate at which the Five Year Plan is being fulfilled, and the people are kept informed whether satisfactory progress is being made or whether it will be necessary to dispatch a brigade drawn from the organizations of Communist youth to recover lost ground and urge the workers to carry out the Plan. Every day thousands of people stand in front of the bulletin-board, studying the figures, their faces filled with a strange enthusiasm. Each time a figure shows that a record is up to expectations, they

glow with pride of their revolutionary fatherland, the first Socialist Republic in the world, which before long will conquer the whole globe.

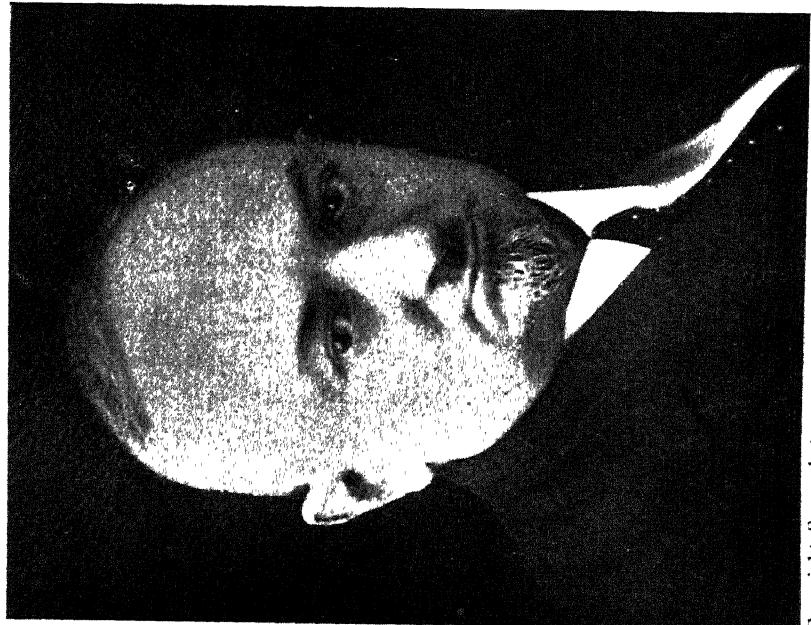
Feverish excitement reigns in Moscow, and immediately infects every stranger who arrives here. The Five Year Plan is advertised on every wall, every placard, in every newspaper, on every letter and label, on the wireless, and in the cinema. It is like the war fever of 1914. The mystery is that after almost a generation of revolution, a nation should still be able to survive this terrible condition of strain without going mad or driving out its leaders. Stalin's great gifts as a ruler are best proved by the magic power with which he has directed the imagination and will of a vast nation towards one common goal.

It is comparatively easy to control the army, the workers, and the urban population by means of the police, but there remained the dull-witted peasants who cling tenaciously to the soil with both hands and feel but little enthusiasm when they see their last cow led away from the farmyard. The peasant eludes the police system which penetrates everywhere else. He is and remains the menacing and anarchical element in the State, and above all, perhaps, in Stalin's Socialist State. Stalin is trying to coerce the peasant as well, and aims at ultimately making him a state-employed agricultural proletarian. After Socialism in *one* country and the Five Year Plan, this aim constitutes the third pillar of Stalinism. The collectivization of the peasantry! The peasantry must cease to exist as a free class. They are to be made to work for the State; organized into collectivist bodies of State employees, they are to hand over the fruits of their labours to the State, and in exchange receive, like officials, the wherewithal to live from the State.

If this idea is feasible and is ever realized, and if the peasant really becomes a proletarian employee of the State, Stalin's work will have been accomplished. In that case every class of the Russian people, the urban folk as officials, the workers as proletariat, and the peasants as the representatives of collectivist



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agriculturists, will be entirely delivered up to the stranglehold of the State, and subordinated body and soul to its uncontrolled and arbitrary will. This people of one hundred and fifty millions will then no longer be able to produce individuals, but will consist merely of a drab mass of subjugated collectivist spirits. But this is nothing more or less than a reversion to the form of government and statecraft of the old Moscow Tsars, of the Chinese Emperors, the Mongolian Khans, and the Persian satraps. For Stalin the Russian peasant has become the object of his greatest experiment, and at the same time is the only member of the State who still dares to resist the dictator. Incidentally, it should be remembered that although Stalin, the outlawed son of a craftsman, was to all intents and purposes brought up in the country, he understands nothing either of the peasant or his life. Here, for once, his Caucasian origin presents a stumbling-block, and his ignorance leads him to form false analogies based on the industrial proletariat which he knows very well. The peasant refuses to comply! And it is precisely here that Stalin carries consistency to extremes, for in order to establish his Communist Empire a collectivist peasantry is absolutely indispensable.

The desperate peasantry find their political expression in the attitude adopted by the Right Opposition, who demand consideration for them.

Collectivism in practice has led to class hostility being artificially fomented in the villages, and the poorer peasants are incited against the so-called Kulaks, that is to say, peasants who are comparatively well off. Stalin's aim is once and for all to exterminate the well-to-do peasant as the representative of individualistic peasant agriculture, and to drive the poor peasant by force into the Kolkhoses (the collective agricultural organizations). The determined prosecution of the collectivist scheme, however, and the fight against the Kulaks, met with bitter opposition on the part of the peasants. A wave of peasant risings swept over Russia, and in some places the soldiers even refused to advance against the insurgents. The result was that the "Chon," the

famous “troops for special uses,” had to be called out. The Right Opposition began to protest and Stalinism seemed doomed. But once more Stalin conquered, and the Party again voted in favour of him. The Right Opposition was swept aside in a few days and the peasant insurrections were brutally suppressed. But on March 3, 1930, hundreds of thousands of copies of Stalin’s essay “The Giddiness of Success,” were distributed all over Russia; and in it Stalin appealed for “a slowing down of the forward movement of collectivism out of consideration for the peasants.”

As usual, Stalin showed himself to be a political realist, and once again routed his opponents while accepting their principles. The peasants were given breathing space, but only for a few months. At the end of 1930 collectivization and the fight against the Kulaks began afresh. The Right Opposition, thanks to their own and Trotsky’s experience, now set to work more stealthily but all the more dangerously. They had acquired some of Stalin’s diplomatic mastery, and anti-Stalinism was cautiously fomented by means of obscure innuendo in the cells, the factories, the conferences and meetings. Even the Army, the bulk of which is drawn from the peasant classes, did not remain unaffected. But the pupils did not prove a match for their master. Stalin conquered again; he always does so long as he has the wonderfully organized police machinery of Russia at his disposal. At regular intervals he discovers ever fresh activities both on the part of the Right and of the indefatigable Left, but he brings them to their senses and gives them brutal disciplinary punishment.

Although Socialism in *one* country, the Five Year Plan, and the collectivization of the peasantry constitute the fundamental ideas, they are merely stages in Stalinism. His glorious ultimate aim always has been and still is World Revolution! But, unlike his predecessors, he regards militarism as the only road to World Revolution which is to be introduced into Europe at the point of Russian bayonets. Only when the Russian soldier has subjugated Europe will the sleepy proletariat of the West throw off

the fetters of Capitalism and help finally to establish Stalin's world Empire.

In this world Empire, Russia, that is to say Moscow, will retain the leadership. For Moscow—and this is the fundamental idea of Stalinism—claims to be ruler of the world.

According to this, the basic idea of Stalinism is the Messianic imperialism of collectivized, communistic Asia, who is now aiming at establishing her supremacy in the world by force of arms. The fact that this ideology, besides constituting a menace to all Europe, may lead Russia to excesses and to outbursts of foolish chauvinism is obvious enough. The Party, from Stalin down to the lowest Communist, and, outside its ranks, large numbers of officials, soldiers, and workers, are filled with a boundless contempt for decadent Europe with her bourgeois proletariat, which is incapable of bringing about a revolution. This contempt for Europe makes the lashes of the autochthonous Asiatic whip, which every Russian feels on his back every day, appear almost a blessing. One single frantic, fanatical idea inspires the Party—the desire to catch up and overtake Europe and then to annihilate her. Collectivist Asia who has found her latest incarnation in Russian Communism feels instinctively that individualistic Europe is her mortal and irreconcilable foe, whom she is called upon to conquer and force into her Oriental paradise.

Stalin makes no attempt to hide his aims. When a little while ago he was given the translation of an article from an English newspaper, in which the danger that Russian expansion constituted for Western Europe was pointed out, he exclaimed triumphantly, "Ah, at last they have understood!" His cunning face beamed with a self-satisfied smile. And in this respect his sentiments are enthusiastically shared by the workers who are carrying out the Five Year Plan, by the agents of the Third International who are conducting the propaganda, and by the Communists who support his policy, in fact, by all who in present-day Russia have any authority.

“We shall overtake Europe!” is the slogan that now dominates Russia. Stalin’s dry revolutionary passion has taken deep root in Asiatic Nationalism, which is reverting to the forms of government peculiar to it, and has suddenly come to the conclusion that it constitutes the highest achievement of earthly wisdom.

In the person of Stalin Asia has turned her back on Europe. But the popularity of Communist ideas in the East is not ultimately to be ascribed to this fact. The people of Asia feel themselves at one body and soul with Stalinism. For the aim of Stalinism is really nothing more than a Communist adaptation of the ancient and immemorial ideology of the Asiatic ruler of the steppes. The world is made to be ruled by us! We Russians, Chinese, or Mongolians are the cream of creation and the whole world must belong to us! Our laws and institutions are the best and must be accepted everywhere. All who do not acknowledge this are criminals! All other nations must be our slaves, for we are “Altyn ulus”—the “Golden Race.” Thus once on a time spake Jenghiz-Khan. Thus spake the Tsars, and thus speaketh Stalin today!

The essence of Stalinism is thus contained in a single oft debated Latin saw, “Ex Oriente lux!” Time passes, languages change, but the Messianic mission of ruling the world, which is peculiar to the steppes of Asia, remains unaltered.

At favourable moments in history it always finds a worthy incarnation in the person of some sombre ruler.

STALIN'S CIRCLE

IN SPITE OF THE VARIOUS OPPOSITION MOVEMENTS, CONSPIRACIES, and schisms, Stalin has hitherto held the rank and file of the Party firmly in hand. Whereas certain prominent Party leaders, owing to the familiarity with the business of government acquired during thirteen years of rule, make their experience an excuse for being critical, occasionally show signs of vacillating in their point of view, and even take the liberty of defecting to the Opposition either of the Left or the Right, the simple Party officials remain, for the reasons already described, loyally and unquestioningly devoted to the Dictator. And Stalin's closest collaborators are representatives of this obscure and obtuse section of the Party who have no opinions of their own. It is they who are the real pillars of Stalinism, and everything that was once said about the automatic machine-like obedience and slavishness of Prussia in the old days applies at the present moment to Stalin's system.

A few of these functionaries might be mentioned here.

First comes Molotov, the second Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Molotov, who is forty, is the humdrum middle-class Communist. He loves his children and his wife. He likes cleanliness, formalities, formalities, and curtains in his windows. When he sees a canary, he listens reverently to its song and heaves a deep sentimental sigh. Communistic virtues, supplemented by a preference for an idyllic existence in the lap of nature, are all that his cold and simple soul requires. He sets domesticity above everything and loves the phil-

osophic doctrines of Tolstoy, according to which he organizes his life. He is a vegetarian, does not drink or smoke, and in America would be given the first prize for all the Christian virtues by the women's societies and the Quakers. His greatest virtue, however, by which Stalin sets most store, is his indefatigable industry, and his self-denying work as an official. Limited as he is, he has, as it were, leased all his assiduity and perseverance to Stalinism, and conscious of his own importance, sits for fourteen to sixteen hours at a stretch at his desk. Sober, cold Molotov is nothing more or less than a creature of industry. His sole mission in this world is to wear himself out in unremitting toil. He is always on the job. He torments all his subordinates, flourishes his power in their faces, sets them a shining example, and full of a sense of responsibility delivers edifying addresses on virtue, while with indefatigable energy he accomplishes Herculean labours in connexion with a hundred and one matters of Party administration and politics. In his heart of hearts he believes neither in the Revolution nor in Stalin, but that is his own concern. As an exemplary official he is zealously devoted to his chief and employer. Stalin values the man's entire lack of ideas which makes him quite innocuous, but hardly ever associates with him and has but small confidence in the powerful second Secretary. At all events Molotov has been of great service to Stalin. It was he who helped him to subjugate the Political Bureau. His frigid bureaucratic coldness terrifies large sections of the Party, and now and again, in unimportant matters, he is allowed to have his own opinion. His intolerable pedantry, his colossal industry, and his conspicuous virtues make him odious to the Party. But Stalin regards all this as a guarantee of his loyalty. Should the need arise, however, even if it is not particularly pressing, Stalin will let Molotov drop without a moment's hesitation.

The political departments controlled by Molotov are those dealing with the Peasant Problem, Foreign Politics, and Party theory. But in all theoretical matters he is not allowed to do more than collect and arrange the material supplied him by

Stalin, on which the latter bases his own decisions about his main lines of policy, entirely regardless of Molotov's private views. Even in the government departments, particularly in the Foreign Office, over which Molotov hangs like a leaden cloud, he is cordially hated. In Party circles he is nicknamed "rock bottom." *

The third Secretary, Molotov's enemy and rival, is Comrade Kaganovich, Stalin's real right hand, and a man of a very different stamp. While Molotov has at least had a university education, Kaganovich's education is limited to the knowledge he required for his trade as a saddler. He is a Jew and hails from the little Polish town of Homel, a Jewish stronghold, and until the Revolution he was an insignificant little saddler. His career, which started with the Revolution, had only modest beginnings. Later on accident brought him into touch with Stalin, who immediately recognized what a treasure this gifted saddler could be to him. He gave him a job and began by playing him off against Tomsky, who was then at the height of his fame. In the post of Personnel-Chief of the Party Kaganovich proved a success. He was a good speaker, looked at things from a purely proletarian angle, and understood the most complicated questions in a flash. Out of gratitude Stalin helped him to obtain the post of first General Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party, an appointment which led to unexpected results as far as Kaganovich was concerned.

As he showed great energy and skill in trying to get the lead in the Ukraine and also contrived to make himself popular with the working classes, the Communist Party in the Ukraine refused point blank to have a Jew as General Secretary. Stalin had recourse to threats, whereupon the leaders of the Ukrainian Communists, Chubary, Petrovsky, and the others unanimously declared that they would rather go over in a body to the Opposi-

* Since the above was written, Molotov has been made President of the Council of the People's Commissars as reward for his fidelity, but as a matter of caution, he was simultaneously relieved of his duties as second General Secretary.

tion than tolerate a Jew among them. Stalin recognized the danger in time and gave way. He recalled Kaganovich but immediately appointed him third Secretary of the All-Russian Communist Party, and thus made him the third most powerful man in the country. Since that day Kaganovich has been not merely the assistant but also the intimate friend of the Dictator. His department deals with questions of organization and he helps Stalin more particularly in the conduct of the Party machine.

In private life Kaganovich is quite as middle class as Molotov. True, he smokes a good deal but he drinks very little and in his spare time goes in for all kinds of sports with his wife. The only recreation in which he and Molotov indulge is a simple game of cards, rather like bridge, which the two rivals often play all through the night. Unlike Molotov, however, Kaganovich is still an idealist; he believes in Lenin and Stalin and as he is only thirty-five he is generally regarded as their successor. But latterly there have been signs that relations between Stalin and Kaganovich are becoming strained. The initiated interpret the fact that Kaganovich has recently been entrusted with the most important and responsible duties as a bad omen, for with Stalin this is always a sure indication of declining favour. If, for instance, a subordinate ever becomes troublesome, he is always promoted to the highest position with a great flourish of trumpets, and both in the press and at public meetings the impression gains ground that the new statesman is the only man who can cope with the job. But in view of the fact that the job in question is as a rule beyond the power of any man to deal with, disappointment quickly supervenes, the press boom dies down, Stalin's Party circles begin to criticize, and the genius of yesterday falls from his pedestal in spite of his friendship with Stalin. This happened to Tomsky at the height of his fame, and a similar fate now threatens Kaganovich, for the carrying out of the Five Year Plan is said to have been entrusted to his care.

Molotov and Kaganovich are civilians and Party Secretaries, and with their help Stalin conducts the domestic and foreign

policy of the country, keeps the Party organization in order and constantly produces fresh treatises and commentaries on Marx and Lenin with which the Communist Party is kept well supplied.

The only power inside Russia which might possibly offer effective opposition to the Communist Party, and on which the exiles build their hopes, is the army. The army is administered and commanded by another of Stalin's trusted friends, General Clement Yefremovich Voroshilov, who was once a herdsman and miner and since Frunze's death has been Secretary of War. Voroshilov learnt the difficult art of reading when he was twelve, but when he was only seven he was already working in the mines for a wage of seven copecks a day. He was the son of a night-watchman and at seventeen became a revolutionary, organized workmen's strikes, had various encounters with the police and was held in high esteem among his fellow-workmen at a factory in Lugansk. He first came across Stalin at the Stockholm Congress and their friendship dates from that moment. He is in some ways a miniature Stalin. Like Stalin he loved to indulge in daring pranks and rash adventures as a youth, and while Stalin was flinging bombs in Tiflis, Voroshilov was smuggling arms and ammunition across the Finnish frontier and distributing them among the workmen of St. Petersburg. In Lugansk, where he lived, he founded a secret laboratory for the manufacture of bombs. He was arrested by the police and banished to Siberia, but fled across Russia to Baku, where Stalin received him with open arms. With Stalin, Shaumian, and Djaparidze, he rendered excellent service to the Party by winning over the workers of Baku to the Revolution. After this he vanished to St. Petersburg, and during the war became a worker in a gun factory. After the October Revolution he rose to be a leading and highly honoured executioner in the Cheka.

This Stalin in miniature was then helped by his prototype to enter his proper calling. When Stalin became a member of the revolutionary war council he, together with Voroshilov, founded

the wild and adventurous guerrilla bands which were the fame and glory of the civil war. In the beginning as head of the first mounted army, then as commander of the whole corps, Voroshilov, urged on by Stalin, passed through all the stages of the military career. At Tsaritsyn he organized his great guerrilla attack, under Stalin's direct command, and his friendship with Stalin earned him the very special loathing of Field Marshal Trotsky. In the critical days when Trotsky's opposition was at its height and Stalin's fate really hung in the balance, Voroshilov in conjunction with Frunze saved the army for Stalin, and after Frunze's sudden death, he was appointed Minister of War to the Union. He has been and is still regarded by many as the future Napoleon of Russia. But he is neither a military genius nor a gifted politician. His whole energies are absorbed in administering the army, he does not trouble his head much about politics and the general line of policy, and in spite of his revolutionary antecedents has developed into a perfect militarist and general. Apparently his whole life is filled by parades, bellicose military speeches, and the practical work of the army. By means of the system of political Commissars, which, by the by, was Stalin's creation, he keeps the officers' corps and the rank and file under constant strict supervision, mercilessly suppresses every sign of opposition and has contrived to create something like a caste spirit in the upstart revolutionary army. In this he is said to have been helped by many officers belonging to the late Tsar's army and to his Guards. Voroshilov strictly forbids the officers' corps to meddle in politics and he has been known suddenly to cast into prison, on some trifling suspicion, even most deserving Red generals and members of the War Council, like Blücher, for instance. Voroshilov's right-hand man is the former Tsarist sergeant-major Budionny who was also a hero of the guerrilla war and of the Tsaritsyn days. He is a barbarian of the good old barracks-square school who to this day has probably hardly even heard of the existence of Marx.

This concludes the short list of the main pillars of Stalinism.

With the exception of Ordjonikidze and Yenukidze, the other names associated with the Dictator are either those of ephemeral figures or of silent and devoted Communists, idealists, and non-entities, who hardly count politically and whom Stalin treats as he pleases. Thus it is not due to accident that even the names of Russian Ministers are entirely unknown in Europe.

Perhaps some mention ought to be made of Litvinov, Chicherin's successor, who has long been head of the Foreign Office and is certainly an important figure in Soviet Russia. Litvinov is constantly being held up to ridicule. His name (it was formerly Wallach), his somewhat dubious past, and the conceited airs he gives himself provide endless material for more or less humorous anecdotes and jokes. His avarice is proverbial as is also his envy of Chicherin who, although he was once a Menshevik, was for many years his senior at the Ministry. The charges brought against Litvinov are not always justified. He has the character and mentality of a small shopkeeper and old-clothes dealer, who by some miracle has entered the revolutionary circle and remained there. People of his type as a rule abandon the dangerous path of revolution as soon as the first enthusiasm of youth has passed and devote themselves to more profitable undertakings such as the timber trade or petty smuggling across the frontier. Litvinov, however, regarded revolution as the more profitable business, and he was not mistaken. As a young man he joined the ranks of the émigrés and played in the Western centres of Bolshevism a very similar part to that played by Stalin in the East, though the scope of his activities and his whole behaviour was meaner, more ridiculous, and unsavoury. He bought and sold old iron, smuggled all kinds of goods across the frontier, haggled for hours with the shrewdest of Polish-Jew profiteers, and was sent to prison from time to time for various shady transactions, but on the whole behaved just as he would presumably have done had he not been a revolutionary. The only difference was that he acted solely on orders from the Party, whom he regarded as a large and powerful firm.

True, he was a revolutionary, and a convinced revolutionary, but surely it was due to no accident that, just as the revolutionary Stalin became a bomb thrower, the revolutionary Krassin the director of secret printing works, and the revolutionary Trotsky an author, so the revolutionary Litvinov became a petty Russian-Polish swindler and trader. But to play the same role for years for his Party leaves its stamp even on a revolutionary, and, at the height of their power, Stalin has remained a conspirator, Trotsky a literary man, and Litvinov a hawker. As Minister for Foreign Affairs he despises all diplomatic forms and ceremonies, quarrels with the diplomats as though they were a set of greengrocers, and it is even asserted in jest that he once boxed an ambassador on the ears. Like many other representatives of the old guard, his personal wants are few. His home consists of two little rooms, he draws a small salary, and although his Party has now been in power for thirteen years, he still lives in constant fear of ending his days on the gallows. For some considerable time he has held no independent views on matters of doctrine. All he wants is to be left in peace and that all should go well with the department committed to his charge—the Foreign Office—where, in spite of Molotov's veiled hostility he manages by his zeal and activity to carry through political measures of the highest importance and to perform really useful and successful work. But in this he is not animated by any regard for the good of Russia, but merely considers the welfare of his Party. The fact that in this case Russia and his business happen to be identical is a pure accident. Nevertheless, he really is a statesman who, with the keen eye of an experienced ironmonger, contrives seriously to safeguard the interests of his department.

Once when he was infuriated by certain startling demands made by the Communist International and went to Stalin and complained bitterly, the Dictator said to him, "Don't forget that you are not merely Foreign Commissar but also a Communist and a servant of the World Revolution."—"At the moment I don't care a damn for the World Revolution and Communism,"

retorted Litvinov. "I am in the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs and must defend its interests. Put me in the department of World Revolution and then I shan't care a damn for the Foreign Office!" An outburst of this kind, worthy of some respectable tradesman who has suddenly been struck by the absurdity of Bolshevik business methods, may one day cost Litvinov dear. But Stalin loves strong language, he knows that Litvinov would never dare to embark on any undertaking without his consent, and regards him as a mere puppet. They say that recently Litvinov has actually learnt how to maintain a dignified presence and to smile diplomatically.

But it is not only the immediate supporters of Stalinism who are numbered among Stalin's closest associates and have long been installed in the Kremlin. Even the leaders of the Opposition belong to the Red Olympus; they too live in the Kremlin, sit on the Central Committee, hold important positions, and are periodically banished, whereupon they confess their sins and return penitently to the fold.

The Kremlin has now finally disposed of the Left Opposition and its leaders have all been banished, but the members of the Right Opposition still cling fast to their posts, try to gain influence, and from time to time receive disciplinary punishment from the Dictator.

The leader of the Right Opposition is Alexei Ivanovich Rykov. He is an old and experienced revolutionary with a long period of imprisonment behind him as well as years of banishment and exile. He has studied and spent much of his life abroad, and in the period immediately following the October Revolution he rendered valuable services as Director of Food Supplies for the Party and the Army. He is an honest man and exceedingly modest and unassuming. In the days of militant Communism and food shortage he was one of the few leaders who also went short and starved, and in spite of the various ailments from which he was suffering refused to take the superior rations to which he was entitled, and declined all sick leave. He

is held in high repute by the Party and is therefore used by Stalin as a figure-head. He is fond of making dignified public appearances and loves to play the statesman and to concern himself with problems of government.

But in spite of his great reputation and the important position he holds, he is politically a cipher. Although he was Prime Minister for some time, he was never able to make a successful stand against Stalin. As he has no firm political convictions, Stalin has put up with him hitherto. Aware of his own political impotence Rykov took to drink, and with a glass of vodka before him he delivers counter-revolutionary speeches which would delight the heart of any Russian monarchist. His weakness for alcohol is a matter of common knowledge and has unfortunately led to vodka being called "Rykovka" throughout the length and breadth of Russia. Stalin regards him as a harmless intellectual, more particularly because, in the event of any serious conspiracy, he always loses heart at the last moment and betrays his associates to the Dictator. In this way he has contrived to hold the highest Government positions and act as figure-head for long periods at a time.

The second leader of the Opposition is generally believed to be Stalin's former favourite, Nikolai Ivanovich Bukharin, who was for many years editor of the *Pravda* and a member of the Central Committee. Bukharin is the dogmatist of the Party. Day and night he wallows in Marxist literature and produces fresh theses and theories. He is a perfect type of the detached schoolman and ascetic of the Middle Ages, despising everything not directly connected with theoretical abstractions and as a trained Marxist always prepared to find a suitable theoretical basis on Marxist lines for every political, cultural, economic, and even social event. This capacity won him the Dictator's special favour for a time, but, recognizing his unreliability, Stalin subsequently abandoned him and gave to Molotov the task of finding the theoretical reasons for his measures. Bukharin was bitterly offended, and with all the casuistry at his disposal he set to work

to prove that Stalinism was very far from being Marxism. But Stalin knows how to deal with him. As soon as his casuistry becomes tiresome, he sends him for a while to a sanatorium where he quickly calms down and promises anything if only he may be allowed to get back to his books and concoct fresh sophistries. In his heart of hearts Stalin no doubt regards his "highly respected Comrade Bukharin" as a harmless idiot, though he likes him personally very much.

Bukharin, however, is very far from being an idiot. Unlike most Bolsheviks, he is a great connoisseur and admirer of good literature; he reads poetry and novels and his criticism of what he reads is sound. The only other members of the Party capable of this were Lenin and Trotsky. Bukharin is a child at heart. In practical affairs, he is utterly helpless and always feels impelled to idolize or hang on to other people. For a while he idolized Trotsky, then he was magnetized by Stalin's power. In private life he is lovable and obliging, he has good manners, and might be quite an agreeable fellow if, like Trotsky, he were not so hopelessly hysterical. His tears flow readily and he alternates between moods of exaltation and despair, and is therefore quite useless to Stalin, who needs cool, prosaic thinkers. He has no very great reputation in the Party and exercises no influence over it.

Stalin's most harmless opponent, however, is the highest dignitary in Russia, the official "President of the State," Comrade Michael Ivanovich Kalinin. Whereas, with all their shortcomings, Rykov, Bukharin, and other members of the Opposition are at least men of a certain education, reputation, and dignity, Kalinin can be compared only to the *muzhik* figure of comic opera whom Trotsky, on his way to Brest-Litovsk, caught sight of on the railway station, dragged into the railway carriage from the street, and presented at the conference table as "the representative of the Russian peasants." The *muzhik* allowed them to do as they liked with him; he slept calmly throughout the negotiations, and as a reward was given vast quantities of

vodka every day. The only difference between him and Kalinin is that Kalinin does not require any vodka. Comrade Kalinin is a peasant, his father was a serf belonging to the noble family of Mordukhai-Boltanski, and Kalinin, in his childhood, used to play with his master's children and then became a lackey in his master's house. Later on he left the country, became a factory hand and a Social-Democrat, was sent to prison several times, was once unmercifully flogged, but never lost the naïve optimistic outlook on life of the Russian peasant. As President of the Soviet Republics he is openly called the "All-Russian village chief" even in official circles. He spends his time travelling about Russia, chatting pleasantly with the peasants, but does not possess a shadow of power. Being a kind-hearted man he now and again grants reprieves, but no notice is taken of them, his orders are not obeyed and the Government never dreams of consulting him on anything. Once when he was in south Russia he reprieved two men who had been condemned to death in some little provincial town and ordered them to be released at once. The local authorities, who were only simple folk, did not know how to treat "the first man in the Union." So they telegraphed to Stalin and received the immediate reply: "If he goes on talking much longer put him into the train and send him back to Moscow." On ceremonial occasions Kalinin, smiling awkwardly, accepts the greetings of the foreign diplomats.

The other inmates of the Kremlin, Krylenko, the mad Public Prosecutor; Bubnov, the Minister of Education; the utterly discredited Zinoviev; and the enthusiast Comrade Lunacharsky, are all lesser lights compared even with Kalinin.

There is no disputing the fact that, as a personality, Stalin towers head and shoulders above those who surround him. His energy, his sober fanaticism, his resolute brutality, and his personal courage have no match in the rank and file of the Communist Party. Neither the old guard nor the new generation come anywhere near him. Stalin is fully aware of this and treats all his subordinates, except the Caucasians to whom he is deeply

attached, with befitting condescension and capriciousness. His handling of his subordinates, whom he constantly plays off one against the other, is an important factor in his art of government, in which he has no rival in the whole of Russia. The following story provides a good illustration of the way he treats his supporters.

In addition to the leaders, there is also another inmate of the Kremlin, the poet Demyan Bedny, the only poet in Russia, except Gorki, who has the honour of associating with the Communist deities. Demyan Bedny, who is the illegitimate son of one of the Tsar's uncles, is a very heavy drinker, and in addition to being a pamphleteer is also the official bard of the Soviet Government whose deeds he chants and glorifies to order in popular verse. He gets the highest fee for literary work of anybody in Russia—five roubles a line, which he had no difficulty in extorting time and again from the Soviet newspapers. But his methods were somewhat peculiar. From one of the papers published by the émigrés he would cut out a long leading article hostile to the Soviet, and stick it on a piece of paper. Underneath it he would write a few rhymed lines, making fun of the article, and get the whole published in the *Pravda*, demanding his fee not merely for his own few lines of verse, but also for the whole of the article, which at the rate of five roubles a line, amounted to a huge sum. For months the *Pravda* patiently continued to pay the great man these exorbitant sums. But there came a day when its patience was at an end. As no Soviet authority dared to approach such an august personage as the great poet, the editorial department, after considerable hesitation, at last decided to appeal to Stalin himself. Stalin received the deputation from the *Pravda*, listened in grave silence to what they had to say, and immediately summoned Bedny to him. He lived close by in the Kremlin and appeared, his face beaming with the hope that the Dictator was going to provide him with fresh material for a lampoon. "You're a nice son of a bitch!" exclaimed Stalin by way of greeting. "What do you mean by ruining our *Pravda*?"

I should never have believed you were such a miserable rascal, such a vile blackguard!" And insult followed insult for some time longer. At last Stalin calmed down. "Henceforward," he observed, turning to the editors of the *Pravda*, "this son of a bitch will get only one rouble a line, and nothing whatever for his quotations from the newspapers of the émigrés." And gazing sternly at the poet, he added: "And now clear off and don't let such a thing happen again!" The poet promised to mend his ways and took his departure. When he had gone Stalin turned to the deputation who had been watching the scene in silent astonishment. "My dear Comrades," he said, "one can't pay the poor devil less than a rouble, or he won't have enough to get drunk on. Nor can we do away with him altogether. Just imagine, if we had a war, whom could we get to write poems about it for us!" He spoke in all seriousness and saw nothing humorous in what he was saying. Comrade Bedny was necessary to the Party and must therefore be allowed to get drunk. But if he drank too much, he must be called to order in a friendly manner, otherwise the Party funds would suffer!

Many similar cases are repeated endlessly in Party circles, and do much to enhance the reputation of the Dictator. They remind people of Peter the Great, who used to treat his Boyars in much the same way. Indeed Stalin's relationship to his fellow-members of the Party is very similar to that which existed between the great Tsar and the petty Boyars. And those who talk of conspiracies and opposition movements within the Party as constituting a menace to the Dictator always forget that there is nobody in the Party today who is in any way a match for him or who could take his place even for a brief space. Rykov, Bukharin, Molotov, and the others cannot hold a candle to Stalin, and it was no accident that after Lenin's death and the fall of Trotsky, it was precisely the insignificant and almost unknown Stalin who rose to be the head of the World Empire. If it is necessary for Russia to be ruled by the hand of a despot, and for the time being this is apparently the case, the Communist Party

of today has only one worthy holder of this dictatorship, Comrade Stalin.

It is hardly likely that Kaganovich, who is supposed to be his successor, will really be able to step into his shoes, though he is skilfully manœuvring to secure control of the Party machine. But Kaganovich is not enough of a personality for the position. It is the general opinion that if Stalin should disappear, his place would have to be taken by a board on which Molotov, Kaganovich, Voroshilov, Ordjonikidze, and others would probably have a seat. But the dictatorship of a board is not likely to be of long duration, even if members of the Right Opposition, such as the schoolman Bukharin and the drunkard Rykov, were invited to take a share in the government.

The bulk of the Party feel instinctively that their salvation depends upon Stalin, and even the leading Communists, who cling to Stalin through thick and thin, are fully aware that the "legendary Georgian" is the last bulwark of the Soviet Power.

STALIN'S MANNER OF LIFE

STALIN, THE ALL-POWERFUL DICTATOR, NOW LIVES IN THE VILLAGE of Gorki near Moscow, in the house in which Lenin spent his last days. His is a lonely, secluded life and only seldom does anyone cross the threshold of his country house unless as a sign of special favour he has been invited by the Dictator himself to drink a glass of wine with him. The house is guarded night and day on all sides by fifteen specially selected and carefully tested agents of the G.P.U. while the whole of the village, in which not a single peasant is to be found today, is occupied by the famous guards of the "Red Flag," who constitute Stalin's bodyguard and are distributed in the houses standing on either side of the broad highway leading to Moscow, in the woods, and in the open fields. This bodyguard was formed by Stalin himself and consists almost exclusively of Caucasians, Ossetes, and Georgians, whose language Stalin speaks and who are devoted body and soul to him. Quite recently specially selected German Communists have also been engaged to serve in this *corps d'élite*, while Stalin's native chauffeurs have lately been replaced by Germans. These men are not interested in Russia's domestic problems, and as foreigners are more dependent than natives would be upon the Dictator himself. Stalin's bodyguard is really an up-to-date troop of Activists, organized on Caucasian lines, and wholly and entirely dependent on Stalin's favour, which makes them ready to follow him through thick and thin. He has contrived to make them hated throughout Moscow, in the factories, in the villages round the city, and in Party circles. When these wild,

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STALIN'S FIFTIETH BIRTHDAY
KALININ, KAGANOVICH, ORDJONIKIDZE, VOROSHILOV, KIROV



armed Caucasians march through the streets, everybody looks on them with eyes of hatred. Stalin and his troops are fully aware of this and the knowledge strengthens the bond between them. Stalin can sleep in peace, his Caucasians will never betray him; for if there is one thing in the world of which they are certain it is that the moment Stalin is overthrown they will be cut to pieces by the people.

Every morning at nine o'clock an armoured saloon Rolls Royce car, spotlessly clean and shining, drives up to Stalin's house. Accompanied by three agents of the G.P.U. the Dictator then drives through the guarded streets to the Kremlin, followed in the rear by two cars bearing soldiers of the "Red Flag." This famous Rolls Royce might of course be the object of innumerable attacks. Indeed such attacks are constantly being planned and plots of the kind are likely to continue. But every precaution is taken to meet them. At the leading English factory, where Stalin ordered the first armoured car, five more were ordered at the same time, which were to be exact replicas of the first. Should any danger threaten, six identical and similarly guarded cars leave the great country mansion in Gorki at specified intervals. Through the windows of each car a glimpse of a scowling Oriental face can be seen half hidden in the shadow. The cars drive to Moscow to the Kremlin, where they enter by six different gates. In the evening they leave by the same six gates. Even the chauffeurs do not know which of the cars Stalin occupies and which is occupied by some Caucasian who plays the Dictator's part, even to the point of being ready for the bombs which may be intended for himself. Even in the Kremlin itself nobody knows when or at which door Stalin will arrive. At meetings, assemblies, and conferences, when Stalin is expected, no one ever knows whether he will really come or when he will arrive. Unlike other Bolshevik leaders, such as Rykov, for instance, who often walks about the city alone without a guard, Stalin never, or very rarely shows himself on the streets. Even at well-controlled Bolshevik meetings he al-

ways appears unexpectedly, suddenly coming in like a flash surrounded by a guard. Everything that the practical knowledge of an Oriental conspirator and chieftain, supported by police with centuries of European experience behind them, can possibly foresee in the way of attempts on his life is guarded against in Stalin's home and everything humanly possible is done to safeguard his life. But he is too experienced a conspirator to forget that even the best protective measures may eventually fail. He knows this and is on the alert. He never receives anyone in his room unless a third party is present, and never has his meals in company.

He knows that he is the last of the Bolsheviks. His fall would mean that the last chance of the Revolution, the World Upheaval, to which he has devoted himself heart and soul, would have vanished. Soon after nine he alights from his car in the huge courtyard of the Kremlin and his Herculean labours for the day begin. Meetings, conferences, interviews, inquiries, enactments, audiences—single-handed he controls the whole administration. He alone holds the whole State in his hands. And for the discharge of the daily administrative work he has become almost indispensable. Work in the Kremlin lasts until late at night, and every day Stalin spends sixteen to eighteen hours at his desk, poring over papers and documents, and forcing the lives of millions of people into his dry, abstract schemes. In the Kremlin he is surrounded by Party friends, men who think as he does; for in spite of his brutality and his undeniable rudeness, intolerance, cunning, and disloyalty, he still possesses in the inner circles of the Party a sufficient number of supporters who are stubbornly devoted to him, the most perfect type of Bolshevik. His colossal will power, his rigid honesty in pecuniary matters, the fear he instils into every rank of society, and last but not least, as Bessedovsky points out, the conviction that, but for him everything would long ago have gone to the dogs, all combine to make the dwindling band of convinced and uncritical Bolshevik

extremists collect around him. And with these men Stalin from within the walls of the Kremlin rules over one hundred and fifty million people.

Hardly anybody leaves the Kremlin during the day. When he has any specially important work to do Stalin goes to live there for weeks at a time. On such occasions he and his family (five in all) occupy two small rooms, which in the old days used to accommodate the lackeys of the Kremlin. All the Communist leaders, the People's Commissars, and so on live on the premises in the old rooms of the historic palace. Although the Bolsheviks have been in power for thirteen years, the nervous tension characteristic of the General Headquarters of an army during the progress of a great battle still prevails in their central office. They still feel they are living on a volcano, and are therefore safest close to each other, behind the stout walls of the Kremlin. The leaders all have their meals together in the building. On the ground floor of the palace a huge table is spread in the dining-room. On plates adorned with the golden eagle of the Tsars are dished up the daintiest courses that the imagination of the Tsar's chefs, who now work in the Kremlin, can devise. With care-worn faces the new masters sit at the table. They hate each other, insult each other quite openly and shamelessly, and all without exception tremble before the mighty man who, in the twinkling of an eye, can hurl them out of the Party, cast them out of the Kremlin, and banish them from the luxurious table to some remote Siberian village. Stalin himself does not partake of these meals. He hates dainty fare. Sitting alone in his office, buried in his papers, he eats the monotonous Caucasian food the chef, or his wholly trustworthy German housekeeper, places before him. But danger lurks even in this. For was not Stalin's old friend, Gukovsky, the brigand of Baku and ambassador to Riga, poisoned in the Kremlin without Stalin knowing anything about it or even being able to speak to him before he died? "Call Koba; I will tell him everything!" were Gukovsky's last words. But Stalin

was not called. He did not know that his friend lay dying. Since that day he has been stricter than ever, and more cautious in the choice of his modest fare.

Late in the evening, often late at night, the Rolls Royce leaves the Kremlin, and, dashing through Moscow, drives through the dark streets out on to the Gorki road. Out of the windows of the car with the sombre eyes of an Asiatic satrap gazes—Stalin. The Asiatic capital with its golden cupolas is sleeping.

Stalin has no time for private life. And yet he leads a private life, which, in its Asiatic way, is very different from that of the other Communists. When he was a young man he married Svanidze, a young Georgian woman, who died of inflammation of the lungs before the Revolution. He had a son by her. Just lately at the age of fifty, at the height of his power, he married Nadya Alleluya, a young Ossete girl of fifteen and the daughter of an Activist from the hills, who with true Oriental submissiveness and devotion is his thrall. He is a good husband, though his ideas of marriage are Oriental. The life led within the walls of the Kremlin by the wives of the head Communists is only what might be expected of women who have suddenly risen in society. From the Eskimo spouse of Ordjonikidze to the refined English-woman who is Litvinov's wife, their whole energies are devoted to gossip, petty intrigue, and feminine tittle-tattle. Scandal is rife. And these members of the Government, all cooped up together in the Kremlin, certainly supply the women with plenty of material for indulging their taste in matters that never fail to interest the “eternal feminine.”

Stalin's wife is the only exception. Throughout the period of Soviet rule not a single word of gossip has ever emanated from her, nor has a breath of scandal ever touched the “most powerful woman in Russia.” Shyly and peacefully she lives behind the walls of the house in Gorki. It is related as a solemn fact that every day, when he leaves the house, Stalin locks his wife up in good Oriental fashion and puts the key in his trousers pocket.

But probably the tale is only a joke intended to show Stalin's attitude towards his family. For hardly anything is known or heard about Stalin's wife. All that is certain is that she is very young, speaks hardly any Russian, understands nothing about politics, and has presented the quinquagenarian Dictator with a baby. As we have already observed, Stalin is a good family man. The following scene is described by the wife of a Socialist of international repute, who spent a few days on a visit at the Dictator's house. One day Stalin, his wife, and the lady in question were sitting in a room with the five-months-old baby in the cradle beside them. Presently Stalin's wife found she had something to do in the kitchen, and begged her husband to keep an eye on the baby. Stalin, whose pipe is never out of his mouth, nodded silently. But as soon as its mother's back was turned, the child began to scream. Stalin went up to the cradle, groped helplessly about and, evidently with the idea of calming the child, puffed the smoke from his pipe once or twice into its face. Naturally it protested and howled lustily. Obviously ill at ease, Stalin lifted his offspring carefully out of the cradle, and as a proof of paternal affection, stuck his pipe into its mouth. The child then began to yell as though it was being roasted alive. At last Stalin, too, lost his temper. "There's a blackguard for you!" he roared, flinging the baby none too tenderly back into the cradle. "He's not a good Bolshevik!" The whole evening had been ruined for him, and until he went to bed, he pottered about, whining peevishly and finding fault with everything.

But Stalin can also be just, and sees that his family are provided with all those things which he either does not want or else despises. His mother, the seamstress, now lives in Tiflis in the Viceroy's Palace, surrounded by regal splendour. Her power in the city is unlimited, and even Comrade Eliava, the all-powerful ruler of Tiflis, bows reverently and humbly when the old Georgian woman enters his office to make a request. "That is Stalin's mother!" he whispers in awed tones to any visitors who happen to be present and have not yet become acquainted with the old

lady. Whereupon they all grow stiff with respect. When Stalin's son grew up and failed to pass his examinations at the Technical Institute in Moscow and showed in other ways that he had no interest in science, Stalin, without further ado, banished him to an out-of-the-way place in Georgia. "If you do not wish to be an engineer," he told him, "be a shoemaker!" When, however, his sister married a Czech Communist, he gave a magnificent Asiatic banquet, in which the luxury of the Tsars was combined with barbarian splendour.

At home, in the seclusion of his estate at Gorki, Stalin devotes his leisure to reading. He reads with the greatest avidity, endeavouring in his riper years to make up for his faulty education. But his chief interest lies in scientific works connected with Socialism, Marxism, agriculture, and similar subjects. He does not care about anything else. He knows little about foreign poets or authors, and among Russian writers, the only one he cares about is the old critic Pizarev, who could not understand why some people felt compelled to express their thoughts in such a way that the ends of their lines rhymed, and on these grounds dismissed Pushkin as a writer who could not be treated seriously. Stalin often reads Pizarev, and his favourite saw, which he uses on every conceivable occasion, "Legends die but deeds live on," is a quotation from Pizarev, which also, in a certain tragic sense, might be applied to Stalin himself. When he does not happen to be reading, however, and is otherwise free, Stalin likes to listen to the pianola which stands in his room, and the piece he puts on most frequently is Chopin's Funeral March. He is also fond of ballets and operas, above all Verdi's *Aida*, and often intervenes personally as a critic in theatrical matters.

Now and again Stalin is seized with an unaccountable eagerness to learn. He is probably vaguely aware that his theological training in the Caucasus is inadequate for ruling a World Empire. A few years ago, for instance, he made up his mind to learn English. He worked at it for a while, saw the hopelessness of the undertaking, and, with a view to the World Revolution,

began to learn German. But it is out of the question for Stalin to think of acquiring another language, seeing that in spite of having ruled Russia for years, he cannot even speak Russian without making mistakes.

Stalin does not cultivate personal relations with his fellow-members in the Party. He knows them too well and is satisfied with the certainty that he holds them all in the hollow of his hand. The means by which he achieves this end are peculiar. Carefully stowed away in his safe at home is a mass of documents which he treasures like the light of his eyes. They contain the most precise information regarding all the leading men of the Party and have been taken from the secret archives of the Tsarist police. Almost every member of the Party was guilty of some misdemeanour in the hopeless pre-revolutionary days—fraternizing with a police officer, diverting Party funds to private needs, maligning Lenin, or something of the kind. The Tsar's police through their *agents provocateurs* were kept well informed on all these matters. And now these files lie carefully locked up among Stalin's secret treasures. In the evening he peruses these jaundiced papers and chuckles over the sins of his comrades. As a rule these sins are allowed to lie buried away in his safe. But should any Comrade become dangerous or try to strike out on a line of his own, Stalin summons him to his office and points to the documents. "You see, in the year 1905 in the village of — you fraternized with the chief of police," he observes gravely. "Take care or you will get into hot water." More often than not this friendly warning suffices, and the rebel immediately falls to heel. But should it have no effect, the miscreant is publicly exposed a few days later, a Party Court is held, and he is banished or possibly shot.

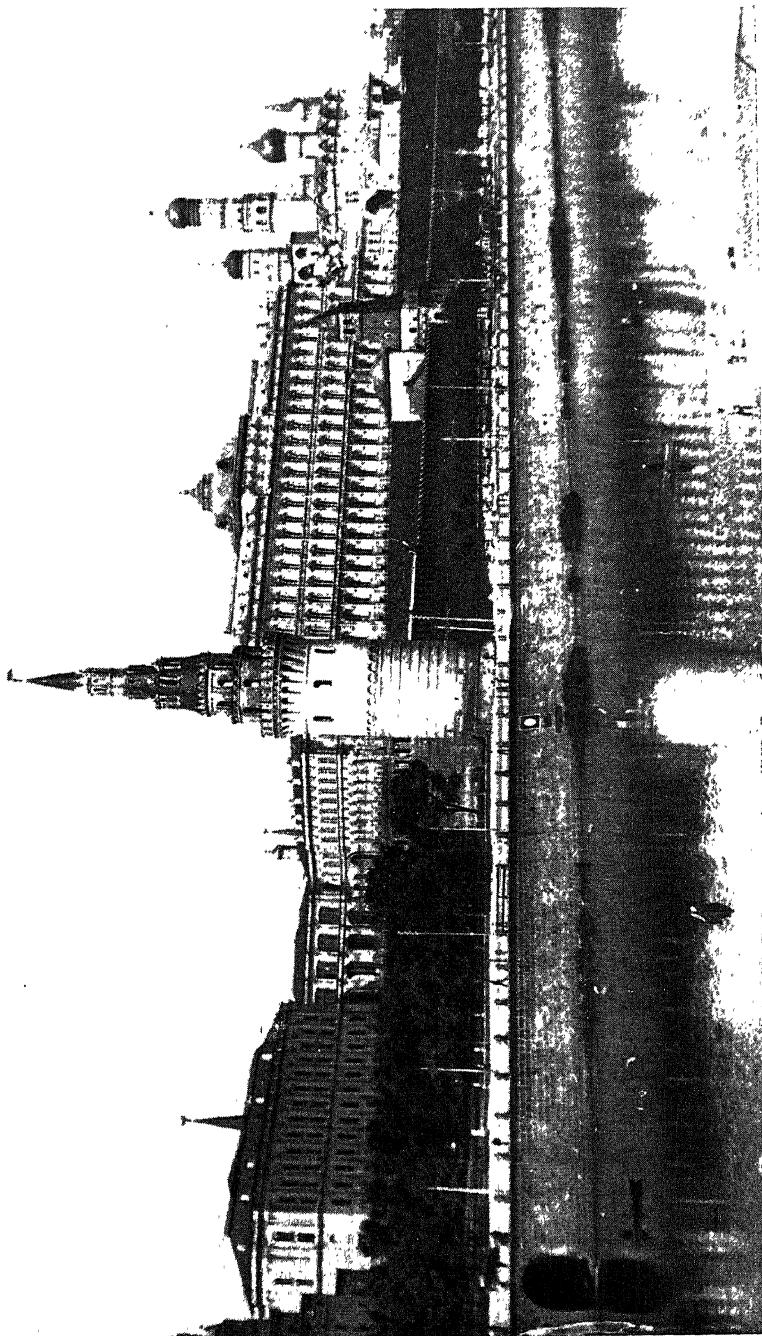
Hardly anybody visits Stalin's house except the well tried friends of yore—Ordjonikidze, Mikoyan, Voroshilov (the present Minister of War), and Kaganovich the ex-saddler and present third Secretary of the Party. These men, who have been tried and not found wanting, constitute the real pillars of Stalin's

regime and are occasionally invited to Gorki. But in his friendships Stalin is just as despotic as in every other relation of life, and his present intimates are no less frightened of him than are his avowed enemies. And indeed Stalin is but little suited for moving in society. He is not a prey to any passion, he has no fixed habits, bourgeois vices, or petty weaknesses, and, apart from his pianola, enjoys no distractions. He is dominated by an abstract idea, which casts its spell over his whole life. His only intellectual possession is the theory of Communism, supplemented possibly by an adamantine conviction that mankind can be ruled only with the whip. Yet the dry, abstract scheme of Communism created by Lenin inspires him with the unshakable belief that his whip will eventually lead mankind to happiness. He does not fear the misery which he has brought into being and for which he is responsible. For in spite of all the evil that has resulted from his rule, in spite of all disappointments and failures, he is probably the only Communist in Russia who has kept a fanatical faith in the advent of the World Revolution fresh and ardent in his heart. This faith which owes its preservation to his primitive mentality and his childlike innocence regarding all questions of world politics, gives him unbounded confidence in himself. All the horrors of Communism and the sinister brutality of his rule will, he is certain, be justified in the eyes of history by the World Revolution.

But the World Revolution still refuses to come about, in spite of the reports of ambassadors and agents, who are every day announcing its advent. And the Dictator grows ever more morose and sullen. For he is firmly convinced that it can break out only under his rule. If he falls, the World Revolution, Bolshevism, and the whole gloomy soul-deadening edifice which he has created and in which he lives, falls with him. His iron hand lays an ever tighter hold on the whip, and the brief orders he issues become ever more insensate and brutal. Blood, crime, a Dictatorship unprecedented in the annals of history, friendship, personality—all is thrown into the scales of the World Revolu-

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THE KREMLIN



tion, which is one day to purify and redeem everything. But that no one in Russia any longer believes in the World Revolution, Stalin cannot and will not see. Lenin prophesied its advent and it must therefore come to pass! Beyond this the son of the Gori cobbler cannot get; that is his genius and his limitation!

In private life Stalin is extremely modest, as are most of the Bolsheviks of the old guard. He wears old and frequently patched and darned clothes, not out of ostentation, but simply because he has done so all his life. He will wear the same suit for years, he is a moderate eater and drinker, he smokes a pipe, and in private life is a living example of Bolshevik asceticism.

Only on rare occasions, when he has his few friends about him, does he open a bottle of good Georgian wine. Then they drink the whole night through. Stalin drinks very little; he fills up his friends' glasses, now and again sings a Georgian song, and towards morning starts dancing a wild Georgian highland fling, with knives, daggers, and barbaric songs. His fifty years, his position and his past have not made him forget the war dance of his native land. In fact, he has forgotten nothing connected with Georgia. Every summer, when the heaviest work of the year is over, he takes a month's leave and crosses the Caucasus mountains to the little Soviet Republic of Georgia, which once rejected him, and is now only a tiny province in his huge realm. Sometimes he goes to Abkhasia on the Black Sea, the most beautiful coast in the world. The site was discovered and built upon by the Prince of Oldenburg, and the palaces which he, the Tsar, and the Viceroy raised there are now largely used by Bolsheviks as summer residences. But Stalin is not enamoured of the palaces of Abkhasia. As a rule he spends his leave in Gori, his native town, where once upon a time, he refused to learn the cobbler's trade.

There he takes up his abode in the old palace of the famous Prince Amilakhvari, and gazes down on the town and the old citadel of Uplistsikhe, dreaming of the World Revolution. Even when he is on holiday in the Georgian vineyards, he still con-

tinues to do his daily Government work. Telephones, wireless apparatus, and messengers keep him in constant touch with the capital of the World Revolution, and every day exhaustive orders and instructions are issued from Georgia, proving that Stalin, although far away in his native land, still holds the reins of government firmly in his hands. During his holiday he always spends a few days in Tiflis, the city in which he performed his greatest deeds, and, as a matter of habit, first visits the railway depot where the great truth of Socialism was first revealed to him. There are still a few old railwaymen who remember the days when Stalin, as a very young seminarist, used humbly to attend their meetings. As soon as he arrives at the depot he hugs and kisses these old Georgians who return his embraces and call him Zozo or Koba, as they did in the old days, and sitting down in some corner with him, true to ancient custom, they drink a bottle of Georgian wine in honour of the guest. These few old workmen are perhaps the only people in all Russia who still cherish some human feelings for Stalin, and still really love and revere their old friend Koba. And they are certainly the only workmen in the country who are loved by Stalin, not in the abstract but with all the warmth accorded to human beings of flesh and blood. "My teachers in the school of Revolution," he reverently calls them. This is not a pose or a dramatic gesture, but the genuine expression of an emotion that surges up in the primitive soul of the Georgian Koba.

In spite of the many laborious hours he devotes to reading and self-education, Stalin cannot belie his coarse and primitive nature. He always has been and still is the product of the dark alleys and passages of the smiling Asiatic city of Tiflis. A few years ago, a well-known English lady artist asked to be allowed to paint his portrait. Stalin consented, and sat patiently watching the progress of the mysterious work with childish curiosity. "Your face is not one that is easily forgotten," the artist told him. Stalin felt flattered, passed his hand proudly over his moustache and smiled self-consciously. "No," he replied, "people like us

are not lost in a crowd." As he spoke his faced beamed with simple and primitive self-complacency.

Stalin's positive qualities are easily enumerated. In spite of his position of power, he does not ape Napoleon as he might easily do; he is tough and capable of great endurance; he impresses his fellows in the Party by his strong personality and is at heart painfully honest, particularly with regard to money matters, a quality which cannot be sufficiently emphasized. He never forgets or pardons financial dishonesty. When he visited Tiflis a few years ago, he was introduced to the leaders of the Caucasian Communist Party in the Viceroy's Palace. Among them was a local magnate, a prominent member of the Armenian Communist Party, Comrade P., who was a Commissar of the People. "In 1906 were you not living as an outlaw in Rostov, under the name of X.?" Stalin asked P., when the ceremony of presentation was over. Astonished and delighted that the great man should know his revolutionary past so well, the Commissar replied that he was. Suddenly Stalin went very red, bowed his head, raised his hand, and gave the Commissar of the People a ringing box on the ears before the whole company. Everybody was dumbfounded. "In 1906 in Rostov, the blackguard stole twenty-five roubles from the Party till," explained Stalin curtly. Hundreds of similar examples of his primitiveness, brutality, and honesty are quoted all over Russia.

In fact everything about Stalin constitutes a butt for gibes and anecdotes, all of which emphasize his peculiar Georgian manner. During his struggle with Trotsky, for instance, everybody in Russia was saying, "What do you hear under the walls of the Kremlin? Jeremiah's Lamentations! And inside the Kremlin? The strains of the Georgian war dance." The Jews had been driven out and their lamentations rose up beneath the walls of the Kremlin. The Georgians had entered and the halls inside echoed to the strains of their Asiatic war dance.

Stalin's remarkable personality, which has already become legendary, is a strange blend of the two great despots of old

Russia. Ivan the Terrible, the executioner of Boyars, and Peter the Great, the mail-fisted Tsar, are his forerunners, and under his rule the cruel methods of the Tsars of old have been revived with added lustre. Yet, unlike these two Tsars, he is still very unpopular in Russia. His inglorious reign drags on enveloped in gloom. The steel broom which the workers of St. Petersburg once gave him he grips with a firm hold and sweeps wildly round, cleaning both the Party and Russia. Yet it never occurs to him that he is merely reviving a venerable old tradition, the tradition of Jenghiz-Khan, of Tamerlane, of Ivan the Terrible, and Peter the Great.

With every movement and gesture, whether at work, in the bosom of his family, in the Party, in Gorki, or in the Kremlin, Yossif Vissarionovich Stalin reveals what he is, and however much he may regard himself as the instrument of the proletarian millions of the world, he is really a sovereign Asiatic satrap, a despot than whom even the East has never produced a greater.

THE LEGENDARY GEORGIAN

OVER THIRTY YEARS HAVE ELAPSED SINCE STALIN WAS EXPELLED from the Georgian Theological Seminary and denounced his friends to the Rector. He has now become the ruler of Communism all over the world. In these thirty years he has developed beyond all knowledge from a seminarist into a terrorist, from a terrorist into a Siberian exile, from an exile into a World Ruler —a career almost unparalleled in history. But at heart he remains unchanged.

Just as they did when he was producing the Georgian newspaper, the *Dro*, so today his thoughts revolve round the narrow circle of the Communist *Weltanschauung*. He speaks and writes badly and yet his speeches and articles have more effect than the most brilliant of Trotsky's tirades. He contrives with enormous vigour and consistency always to hammer his simple reasoning into the thick skulls of the masses. And in achieving this end the energy of his intonation and his resolute gestures do more than the meaning of his words. To him alone belongs the power in Russia, and he shares it with no one, not even with his closest comrade-in-arms. He alone knows all that is happening throughout his vast realm and tells his assistants only what he thinks necessary. The rest he keeps to himself. This makes him indispensable, and the Communists are fully aware that the fall of Stalin will involve the fall of the system, if only because there is no one who holds the key to the whole of Russia as Stalin does. When in 1929 the Caucasus in a body rose in open insurrection,

Stalin had the entire area surrounded by special troops of the G.P.U. and no news of the uprising was allowed to reach Russia. Even in Moscow no one knew about it except Stalin and the heads of the G.P.U., and it was only months after it had been suppressed that the Government departments and the Party authorities concerned were informed of it. But Stalin knows everything. Whether the German Communist Hölz has thrashed his doctor in the Caucasus, or General X. has fallen in love with a dancer, or Rykov is hatching another conspiracy, it all finds a place in Stalin's brain, and he knows how to make full use of the information at the right moment. His only love, now as ever, is Communism. To Communism he has sacrificed everything, even his loyalty to his master, Lenin. When he saw that Lenin, whom he had served a score of years or more, no longer held the faith with all his old fervour, Stalin actually turned against the man while contriving to safeguard "his" doctrine.

Stalin is above all a realist in politics. He is constantly thinking out ways and means of adapting his theory to the demands of the Age. Although he has revived militant Communism in Russia, he is ready at any moment, should the need arise, to take a step backwards. He rules in the Kremlin, but it is no easy task. Many are the hands outstretched to seize the dignity of Russian autocrat from him, and they are muscular hands deep dyed in blood, the hands of men who, schooled in murder and sedition, have wide experience of all the treacherous arts of conspiracy. Communists in the Opposition camp, generals, exiles, old friends and comrades-in-arms, old enemies and concealed opponents, are one and all striving to take Stalin's place. At every moment he has to be prepared for any emergency. Never is he sure of his life or his power. A man must be possessed of quite exceptional will power, and must be supremely though perhaps one-sidedly gifted, in order day after day, year in, year out, to unearth conspiracies, defeat plots, and escape attempts on his life which are frequent enough.

Stalin carries on the old tradition of Oriental rulers and despots. He rules behind a screen.

Somewhere in the Kremlin, apparently cut off from the rest of the world, the ruler sits. Nobody is allowed to see him; nobody is allowed to speak to him, however urgent their communication may be. He takes care to know everything, and in his lair he thinks and ponders over the fate of the people. The mystic halo with which the East has for centuries surrounded the representative of power has in Russia been given to Stalin. He has become a symbol. He is, as it were, the spirit on the lonely height, the all-powerful being who watches over everything and whom the subject regards as his last refuge. His reserve, his hatred of publicity, have done much to add lustre to this halo. The mystic concept of a good ruler who, sitting apart solitary and reserved, is anxiously concerned about his people's welfare and is deceived by the wicked members of his suite, an idea ingrained in every Asiatic state, is now incarnate in Stalin. The peasants flock from the villages to Moscow, to prostrate themselves humbly at Lenin's tomb and to look devoutly at the walls of the Kremlin behind which the all-powerful ruler sits. The workers alone have the right to come to him personally with their troubles, and he talks to them in a friendly way like a just ruler, though he but seldom receives even them. The feeling of distance and inaccessibility must be preserved as far as possible. He frequently receives the children, however, the young Communists, who are all heartily in favour of "Socialism in *one* country."

The East is accustomed to the idea of a ruler who governs invisibly behind the walls of his palace. Such was the rule of the Emperor of China and of the Khalifs, such too is the rule of their legitimate heir, Stalin. The less people know about him the more powerful is his rule. Not a sound, not a word of information ever escapes from the walls of the Kremlin, unless it be a report, by no means exaggerated, of his unexampled asceticism, his zealous industry, his diligence and wisdom. Within those

walls sits the secret unofficial power which directs the official power of the People's Commissars. There decisions are reached embodying infallible truth, and in sublime seclusion the power that rules over continents sits enthroned.

In the Kremlin, in the intimate circle of his trusty friends, Stalin lets the veil fall from his face. There he feels he is the solitary ruler of united Asia. He has a profound contempt for the idea of national independence among his republics, and believes only in a united Communist Eurasia, whose first Nationalist he is. The independence of the republics he regards as mere make-believe, which there is no need to preserve in every case. He himself appoints their heads, often drives out the whole of the local administration, is constantly limiting the functions of the local authorities, and laughs cynically when he is reminded that, after all, the Union is made up of free Republics.

In this he is not guided by pan-Russian Nationalism, although it profits most from his policy, but by the idea of a super-national State of Eurasia, which he firmly believes can be ruled only with the whip. To make the lash of this whip felt, the Nationalism of individual republics must be combated. This he achieves by the very same means as were once used by the Tsars. He settles Russian peasants in districts inhabited by non-Russian peoples, has Russian taught everywhere, disbands all national and local troops, nominates the officials himself, and gradually concentrates the administration of all the districts included in the Union in his own hands. The pan-Russian Communists watch his efforts with the profoundest enthusiasm. Stalin has deliberately centralized everything. Matters which only a little while ago were the business of the local Soviet or the local Communist authorities, are now settled at the headquarters of the Central Committee in Moscow. His orders only are rigidly enforced on the spot. Stalin does not admit the right of private judgment. He alone thinks for everyone. His thoughts expressed in his speeches, orders, and laws must be followed throughout the whole State, even when they contradict one another. He

took the burden of thinking for everybody on his own bare shoulders. His orders and speeches are couched in such simple and comprehensible form, that they make independent thought quite unnecessary for the ordinary member of the Party. Thinking, deciding, and forming resolutions Stalin makes his own business. But the essence of power, in his opinion, consists, not in the external pomp of the ruler, or in his position in the eyes of the world, but purely and simply in directing the machinery of Government, in manipulating men, in mastering their secret instincts, in playing enemies off against each other, in masterly chess moves, and above all in the organization of the police, the Argus-eyed pan-Russian spy system. He loves the idea of power, as it is wielded only by Oriental rulers who are accustomed to govern indirectly through the hands of strangers.

As we have said, Stalin knows every detail of the life of Russia. On the other hand he knows nothing of Western Europe. He is barely acquainted with the Western Powers and they are therefore incomprehensible to him. Every day his ambassadors and the agents of the G.P.U. and of the Third International report to him that Europe is on the verge of collapse and anarchy. Woe betide those who do not supply this information! Stalin insists on having it and is therefore sent reports in which a small demonstration is magnified into a street battle, a peaceful workers' conference into an event of international importance, and a fight into an outbreak of revolution. Stalin reads the reports, waits for the progress of the revolution and proceeds to increase the subsidy paid to the Communist Parties of Europe, whom he already imagines in his mind's eye as the departmental heads of his World Government.

But this only has the effect of making Stalin preoccupy himself all the more busily with the East. In this sphere he is himself an expert and is not dependent on other people's reports. In his realm the East is triumphing. Stalin himself is the principal of the School of Propaganda in the East. With his help the East has come to dominate everywhere. Orientalists enjoy his special

favour, and nothing is felt to be too good for them. This also applies to the innumerable political, economic, and above all to the police organizations in the East. The face of new Russia, like that of its ruler, is plainly turned towards the East. But Stalin is too much of an Oriental merely to wish to flirt with the East. He wishes to rule her. When, for instance, disturbances broke out among the Chinese workers on the Chinese railway, Stalin's orders were brief and to the point: "Send the Cossacks to them! Flog them well!" And he gives similar orders in the case of the Caucasus, Turkestan, and every sphere over which his power extends. He gives the East that which is her own; the East obeys, and is even beginning to love this legendary ruler, who is flesh of her flesh, and blood of her blood.

Stalin's policy is one of Eurasian Imperialism, and consciously or unconsciously he is carrying on the traditional policy of the Tsars, whose heir he has become. This is one of the most characteristic features of the Russia of today. The main outlines of Russian policy, which have remained unchanged for centuries and were merely blurred for a while by the Revolution, have been restored by Stalin. Expansion eastward, the occupation of Mongolia and Manchuria, the colonization of Turkestan and the Caucasus, rivalry with England, and a deep mistrust of Europe—all these features of Tsarist foreign policy are included in Stalinism. Even in home politics, the old lines are being mainly followed. Extreme centralization of the administration, exploitation of the people and development of industry at the cost of the masses, were also features characteristic of the era of absolute Tsarism. Even the collectivization of the peasants finds its parallel in the days of Alexander I, when General Arakcheyev founded "Voyenniya posseleniya" (military settlements) on similar lines. Stalin's policy is the policy of a Tsar who, without departing from his traditional policy, sets up a claim to rule the world.

The only difference is that the Tsar pursued his policy officially in the name of Russia, while Stalin pursues his in the name of collectivist Red Eurasia.

Stalin is now over fifty. The nickname which Lenin gave him—the legendary Georgian—has stuck to him. He himself has gradually become a legend. All about the Kremlin, legends of his courage, his rudeness, and his cunning are repeated, and their number grows every day. It is already difficult to distinguish truth from fiction. It is said that he thrashes his Ministers with his own hands, and a moment afterwards overwhelms them with marks of favour. Tales of this nature create a deep impression in Russia, and remind the people of the days of Peter the Great. When in the winter of 1930 certain sections of the Army became restive owing to bad food, Stalin, at a meeting of the People's Commissars proposed to have recourse to Draconian measures in dealing with the situation. But Voroshilov, the Minister of War, was emphatically opposed to this. "Do not forget," he said irritably, "that I am in a position to blow the whole Kremlin up." Stalin immediately sprang to his feet and dashing towards the Minister of War, thrashed his old friend in the presence of all the Commissars. The effect was instantaneous. Voroshilov at once forgot his threats. From this it will be seen that when diplomacy is of no avail Stalin knows how to secure his power and prestige by means of his own fists.

Stalin is hated as perhaps no other ruler has ever been hated in Russia before. He is fully aware of it, but the fact does not trouble him in the least. He knows the wise old Oriental saw: "The ruler demands obedience; God alone demands love." But for God he would substitute Abstract Communism. The Russian must love Communism, but he need only obey Stalin. Stalin's career is spotless. He is perhaps the only Communist who has never been guilty of heresy since the year 1903, and who has never shown any signs of backsliding.

His career from the Theological Seminary to the papal throne of a new world religion certainly does not lack a certain sombre and unique magnificence. He goes his own way unconcerned, and the opinions of his comrades-in-arms hardly interest him. At the meetings of the Political Bureau, when the most

vital questions of world politics are discussed, he allows even the highest officials of the Union to speak for only three minutes. In debates speeches are limited to one minute. Stalin looks at his watch and interrupts the Minister even if the matter is one of life and death for the country. He has long since made up his own mind on every question and doubt has ceased to exist for him. He is the Pope, the leader of an order of monks, and as such is infallible. He is fully aware that he is unique among men and is not preparing anyone to be his successor.

He knows that he will either witness the World Revolution himself, or else that the phenomenon, as the only historical justification of Communism, will never occur. And he has contrived to inculcate this faith upon large sections of the Party, as an unassailable dogma.

Stalin is now at the zenith of his power. Lenin's brilliantly organized machinery of Soviet rule serves only him and his one-sided, limited, and grandiose aims, which are simple and characteristically Caucasian. Like every Caucasian knight, he is convinced that the life of his clan must provide the world with a brilliant example. His clan is Eurasian Communism, and the world which refuses to follow his example is the individualistic world of Europe. Consequently Europe must be compelled to follow it. And the Caucasian, Stalin, knows a means whereby Europe can be forced to do so—the sword.

At the epoch-making moment when the East, Asiatic Collectivism, and Bolshevism are bound to come into conflict with Europe, Asia has placed one of her most brilliant figures at the head of affairs. In the Caucasian mountains, in the deserts of Mongolia, on the steppes of Russia, there live lonely robber knights and bandits of the steppes. They sit by the glowing fires of their huts, ride through the land, despise the world they do not know, and hatch brutal plans of sombre simplicity. They hate the world that does not belong to them, and which after all was made to be enslaved. For thousands of years these knights

have sat by their fires, pondering, plundering, and passing away. But when Europe gave them the science and knowledge of the West, when the hour arrived to realize the immemorial dreams of Asia, these Eastern knights, dreamers, ascetics, and robbers produced from their midst the colossal figure of Stalin, the gigantic phenomenon of a Red Pope, a Red Jenghiz-Khan, who is a knight, a dreamer, and an ascetic all in one. Stalin knows it. Behind his low brow there was room for but one thought, and it remained there and contrived to survive through the years. He calls it World Revolution. But it might with equal justice be called Asia's campaign against Europe. His mission, which is to incite Asia to war, he knows how to accomplish to a nicety. But he is still collecting his forces, he is still ordering machines from abroad or building them at home, he is still raising factories and making roads, and forcing the population into the narrow confines of the Party outlook. The legendary Georgian is still trying to unite with the peoples of Asia, in China, India, and Arabia. His agents are still ranging the continents, spreading the glad tidings of the awakening of the united masses.

The people of the East are listening to him eagerly; they see flames rising above the cities of Europe; they see themselves riding on long-maned little ponies through the streets of these towns, and their slanting eyes, in which the yellow sands of their deserts are reflected, will look calmly on at the blood that must flow wherever their gaze is turned. These eyes know no pity and would make the whole world Asia. The awakening of Asia has come and as she rises up out of her long slumber she reaches out for the knife. And above Asia, above the steppes, the deserts, the boundless rivers, and mountains, and over the whole of happy mankind, at last made collectivist, united and dull, looms the dark countenance of the legendary Georgian, Zozo Djugashvili. His little eyes smile cynically, his low brow is puckered, his lips are pursed in contempt. Stalin is content with his lot. He is certain of the World Revolution. The great goal will soon be

reached. In the Kremlin, shut in and protected by those hoary walls, he awaits the hour when he will level his last decisive blow.

About him stands an army numbering millions. Can he rely on it? Will the Red generals carry out his orders? Or one gloomy, misty day will one of them occupy the Kremlin with the troops of the Red Flag, lead the Opposition to victory and thus postpone for centuries, perhaps for millenniums the day when mankind will be finally Orientalized? Stalin is fully alive to the dangers encompassing him. He knows his enemies, and has so far contrived in masterly fashion to combat and checkmate them. Will he always be able to do so? The number of his enemies is great, and it grows daily. Apparently it is not everybody in Moscow who wishes to see Stalin's Asia established on earth!

But Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin, the General Secretary of the Communist Party, is still ruling behind the walls of the Kremlin, and is the symbol of the greatness, the cruelty, and the power of Asia, who is threatening to hurl herself at the throat of Europe.

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